

Creative Centenaries

Remembering the Future

Activity

04

Mythbusters

This interactive quiz will test your knowledge about 1912—22. Be prepared for a few trick questions!

A Decade of
Anniversaries

Schools
Resource

A Prototype Local Study: West Belfast 1912—1922



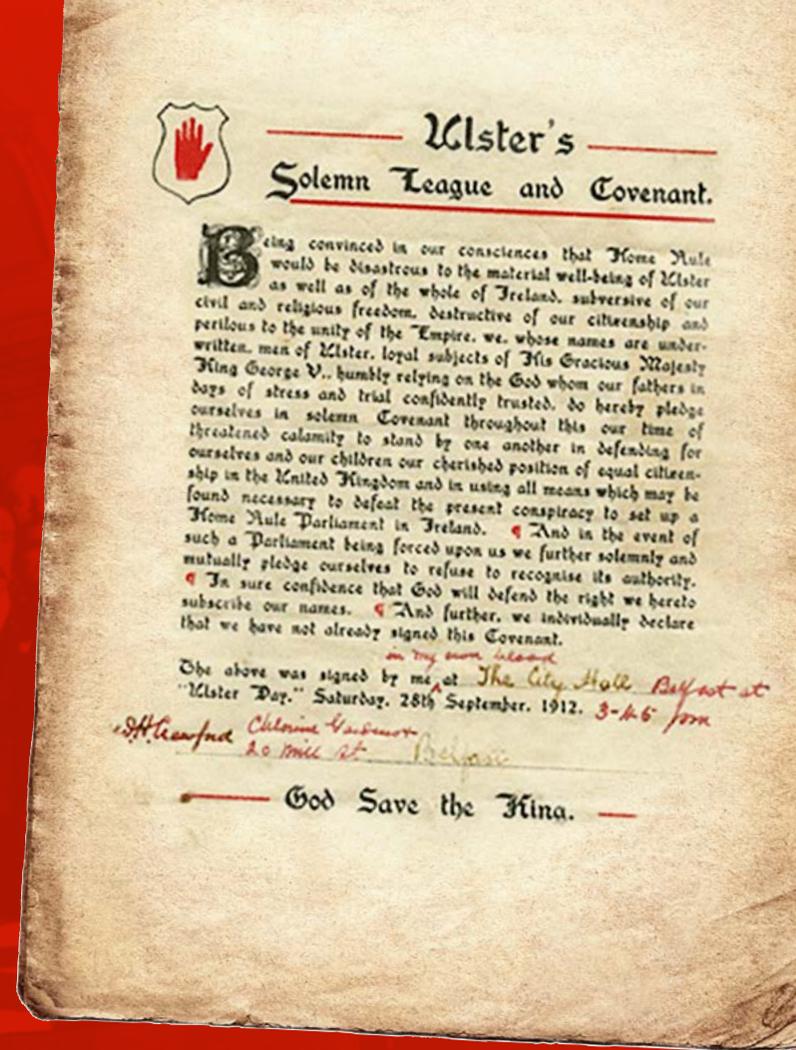
Activity

04.1a

The Ulster Covenant



Many people signed the Ulster Covenant in their own blood?



Mythbusters Quiz

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ULSTER DAY. SIR EDWARD CARSON SIGNING THE COVENANT, BELFAST CITY HALL, 28th SEPT., 1912.

Activity

04.1a

The Ulster Covenant



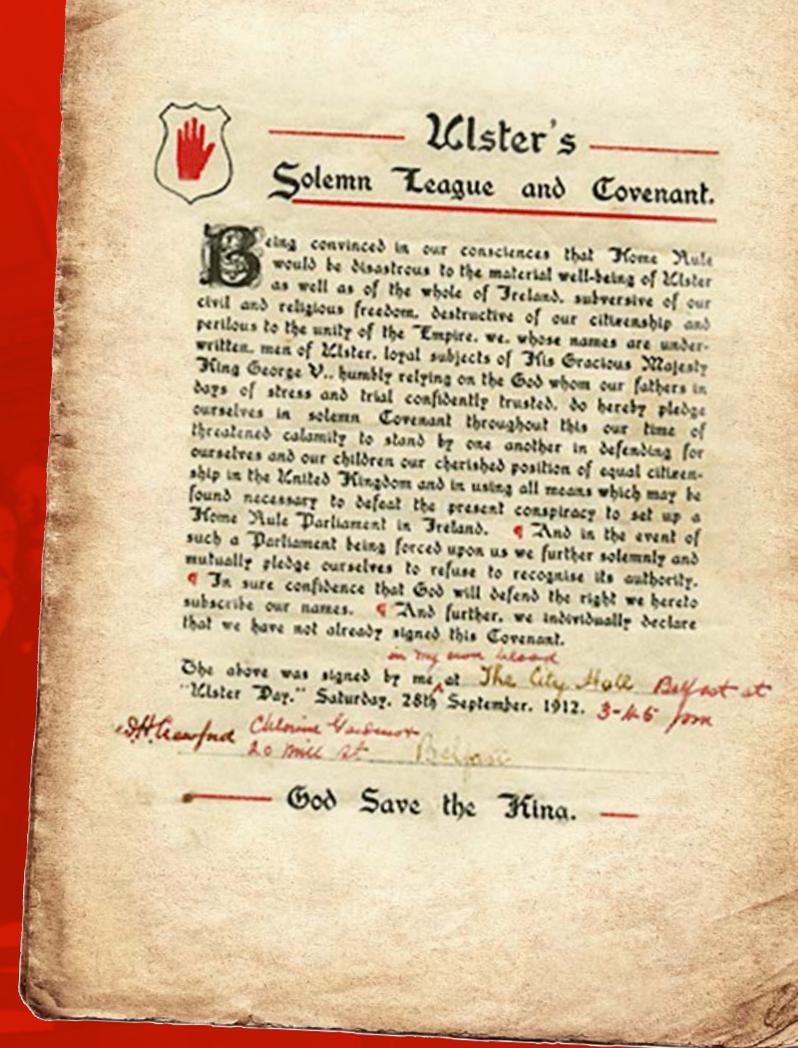
Many people signed the Ulster Covenant in their own blood?

False

False:

Although this is a very popular legend, there is no evidence to prove it.

Only one copy of the Covenant is known to exist with a "blood" signature; it was written by Fred Crawford, who went on to organise the Larne gun-running. In fact, a recent scientific test suggested that Crawford's signature was "symbolic" and not actually blood at all.



Activity

04.1_b

The UVF/Irish Volunteers



Which organisation
flew this flag?



Activity 04.1_b

The UVF/Irish Volunteers



Which organisation flew this flag?

a
The Belfast Irish Volunteers

c
The 36th Ulster Division

b
The Belfast UVF

d
The Belfast Irish Volunteers



d) The Belfast Irish Volunteers

The Belfast Irish Volunteers were proud to be Nationalists from **Ulster**, so their flag demonstrated this identity.



Activity **04.1c**

The UVF/Irish Volunteers



How many Protestants
joined the Irish Volunteers?

Activity 04.1c

The UVF/Irish Volunteers



How many Protestants joined the Irish Volunteers?

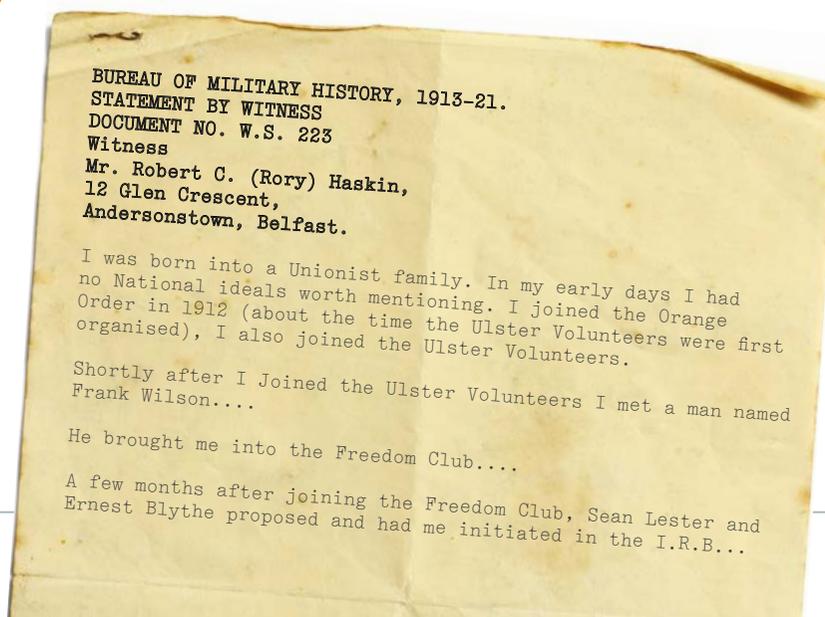
a
None
– the Irish Volunteers was only for Catholics.

c
Some
– although most Irish Volunteers were Catholic, some Protestants also joined.

b
Lots
– many Protestants were Nationalists who were prepared to fight for Home Rule.

c) Some – although most Irish Volunteers were Catholic, some Protestants also joined.

The vast majority of Irish Volunteers were Catholics, but the organisation accepted Nationalist Protestants as well. In fact, some of these Protestants were more extreme Republicans who joined the “Sinn Fein” Irish Volunteers and supported the Easter Rising. Three examples are Archie Heron who worked in Divis Street, Rory Haskin from the Donegall Road and Seamus Snoddy from the Ormeau Road. Haskin is especially remarkable because he was originally an Orangeman and briefly belonged to the UVF before becoming a Nationalist. He was arrested after the Easter Rising (he had been trying to organise the rebellion in Tyrone) and played a leading role in the Belfast IRA in the 1920s.



Activity

04.1d

The UVF/Irish Volunteers



Who coined the phrase
“Prepared for peace,
ready for war”?

a) Sir Edward Carson,
speaking to the Belfast UVF.

c) Loyalist paramilitaries
after they announced
a ceasefire in 1994.



Activity 04.1d

The UVF/Irish Volunteers



Who coined the phrase “Prepared for peace, ready for war”?

- a) Sir Edward Carson, speaking to the Belfast UVF.
- b) Joe Devlin MP, speaking to the Belfast Irish Volunteers.
- c) Loyalist paramilitaries after they announced a ceasefire in 1994.



b) Joe Devlin MP, speaking to the Belfast Irish Volunteers.

The phrase “**prepared for peace, ready for war**” comes from a well known Latin proverb: *Si vis pacem, para bellum*. Today it is best known for appearing on Loyalist paramilitary murals. However, the phrase was first applied to an armed group in Ireland in June 1914, when the Nationalist MP Joe Devlin told the Belfast Irish Volunteers:

“I ask you to go on, continuing in your patient resolve to war with no men, but to be prepared for peace and ready for war...”

Activity

04.1e

The UVF/Irish Volunteers



Describe the relationship between the UVF and the Irish Volunteers.

- a) Bitter hatred marked by occasional violence
- b) Mutual suspicion and resentment
- c) Tolerance and goodwill

Activity 04.1e

The UVF/Irish Volunteers



Describe the relationship between the UVF and the Irish Volunteers.

a) Bitter hatred marked by occasional violence

b) Mutual suspicion and resentment

c) Tolerance and goodwill

d) Complicated

d) Complicated

In 1914 the UVF and Irish Volunteers seemed ready to go to war with each other over Home Rule. Yet despite this rivalry, their relationship was not one of simple hatred. Both organisations were well-disciplined and took great care to prevent their members provoking each other to violence (in Derry~Londonderry for example, both forces lined the route of the annual Apprentice Boys parade to prevent disturbances between Unionists and Nationalists.

The relationship between the UVF and Republicans was even more complicated. In 1914 the IRB admired the UVF for defying the British Government and setting an example of armed resistance. Dr Patrick McCartan, an IRB man from County Tyrone, actually loaned his car to the local UVF to help them transport the guns from Larne. McCartan later helped to lead the failed attempt to support the Easter Rising in Ulster. According to another IRB leader, Denis McCullough, the Belfast Volunteers preparing for the Rising bought supplies from a UVF store. Even after WW1, when sectarian tensions began to rise, there are still accounts of IRA activists buying weapons from UVF personnel.

Activity

04.2

Conflict: The start of WW1

As soon as WW1 broke out, Unionists rushed to volunteer for the British Army. It was an expression of their patriotism – their desire to fight for their King and Country.

04.2

Conflict: The start of WW1

As soon as WW1 broke out, Unionists rushed to volunteer for the British Army. It was an expression of their patriotism – their desire to fight for their King and Country.

True

False

False

Although some Unionists did “join up” very quickly, many were reluctant. Instead of fighting against Germany, they believed they should stay in Ulster to be ready to fight against Home Rule. It was only in September 1914, when the 36th Ulster Division had been formed and approved by Sir Edward Carson, that Belfast UVF men joined up en masse.

West Belfast UVF officer Percy Crozier wrote:

There was difficulty in obtaining the signatures of the men to serve ‘unconditionally anywhere’ in a Division, not because they did not want to go, but on account of the accursed Irish question. They feared the South. He overheard this conversation in a Belfast club shortly after the war began:
‘The whole world will be fighting’
‘Not unless Carson says so’
‘If those ***** Papists get going when the boys is in France, there will be as much ***** hell on the Shankhill [sic] and the Falls for us old ***** , as any of ‘em will get in purgatory and Bravo Redmond will have his belly full before we’ve finished with them.’

Convinced by Carson that joining up was the right thing to do, some men of the Ulster Division changed their minds later:

Carson got a great reception during his visit [to the Division in July 1915], but if he had visited us nine months later in France, many would have killed him. They felt that it was he who had got them into their predicament.

Activity

04.2_b

The start of WW1



In West Belfast on 19th September 1914, you would have seen Union flags flying and bonfires burning. You would have heard people singing the National Anthem. Who was celebrating, and why?

a) Unionists, because Sir Edward Carson was coming to Belfast.

b) Orangemen, because the British Army had won a battle.

Activity 04.2_b

The start of WW1



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a) Unionists, because Sir Edward Carson was coming to Belfast.

b) Orangemen, because the British Army had won a battle.

c) Nationalists, because King George had signed the Home Rule Bill and made it law.

Mythbusters Quiz

From the police monthly report for Belfast, September 1914.

At St Michael's (Church of Ireland) Church, on the 27th September, one half of the congregation left whilst the National Anthem was being played on the organ. Very few of those who remained joined in the singing.

Since the passing of the Home Rule Bill, the audience at the west End Picture House, Shankill Road, have groaned and hissed when the King's photograph was displayed.

From the police monthly report for Belfast, September 1914.

It is reported that during a football match at Belfast, on the 19th September, a Union Jack was flying on the chief flagstaff of the Celtic Football Grounds, which are owned and controlled by Nationalists. A Nationalist band at the conclusion of the match played the National Anthem.

THE IRISH NEWS

AND BELFAST MORNING NEWS,
SATURDAY 19 SEPTEMBER 1914

The Day after the King signed the Act.

The Nationalists of West Belfast were delighted that the British Government, including the King, had finally granted Home Rule for Ireland. They were especially happy that it had been won by constitutional methods, i.e. passed by parliament after the efforts of Nationalist MPs. Even though setting up a Home Rule Parliament had been delayed until the war was over, Nationalists' celebrations showed their delight, their appreciation to the Irish Parliamentary Party, and their gratitude to the British King and government.

Activity 04.2c

The start of WW1



In West Belfast in September 1914, a church congregation walked out when the National Anthem was played. A cinema audience also groaned and hissed when the King's picture was displayed. Where did these events happen?

Activity 04.2.c

The start of WW1



In West Belfast in September 1914, a church congregation walked out when the National Anthem was played. A cinema audience also groaned and hissed when the King's picture was displayed. Where did these events happen?



b) Shankill Road: St Michael's Church of Ireland and the West End Picture House

Unionists were bitterly disappointed that Home Rule had passed, and felt betrayed by the British authorities. Although they remained loyal, they clearly expressed their disgust. They were determined to continue opposing Home Rule whenever the Government tried to create an Irish Parliament after the war.

Activity 04.2c

The start of WW1



Why did Unionists volunteer to fight in WW1?

- a) They were loyal patriots who wanted to fight for Britain.
- b) They wanted some excitement and the chance to travel.
- c) They needed a job.

Activity 04.2.c

d) All sorts of reasons, including a, b and c.

Unionists were patriotic, but this was not always their main reason for joining up. Like any people, Unionist volunteers had other concerns as well as their loyalty to Britain.

The start of WW1



Why did Unionists volunteer to fight in WW1?

- a) They were loyal patriots who wanted to fight for Britain.
- b) They wanted some excitement and the chance to travel.
- c) They needed a job.
- d) All sorts of reasons, including a, b and c.

I left school at about twelve years of age and went to serve my time in the old Ulster Spinning Company, in the Falls Road branch. I hated it...

So when I came to join up when the War came, it wasn't a challenge or anything to do with patriotism, it was simply: here's an escape route to get out of the mill, for surely life holds more than what this mill can offer?

Jack Christie
from the Shankill was 16 when he joined the Ulster Division with his UVF comrades:

I was an Ulster Volunteer as were nearly all of the original officers and men of the battalion. I was sixteen and a half and decided to join up for the fun and excitement. Quare fun it turned out to be! My parents didn't like it when I told them I was joining up.

We didn't think the War would last long enough for us to get to France. We thought it would be over by Christmas as the stalemate of the trenches hadn't set in yet.

Leslie Bell
from Moneymore joined the 10th Inniskilling Fusiliers (The Derrys):

Activity 04.2.d

Belfast soldiers



This photo shows a unit of West Belfast soldiers receiving shamrock from their commander's wife as a St Patrick's Day gift. Which unit is it.



**Shamrock Day
at Ballykilner**

a) The 6th Connaught Rangers
(West Belfast Irish National Volunteers)

Activity 04.2.d

Belfast soldiers



This photo shows a unit of West Belfast soldiers receiving shamrock from their commander's wife as a St Patrick's Day gift. Which unit is it?



Shamrock Day at Ballykilner

a) The 6th Connaught Rangers (West Belfast Irish National Volunteers)

b) The 9th Royal Irish Rifles (West Belfast UVF)

The 9th Royal Irish Rifles (West Belfast UVF)

In 1915 most Unionists were proud to be Irish as well as British (after all, they wanted the whole of Ireland to remain united to Britain). The 36th Ulster Division was regarded as an Irish military unit, and of course the West Belfast UVF men had joined the Royal *Irish* Rifles regiment.

Activity 04.2.d

Belfast soldiers



During WW1, Catholic and Protestant soldiers from Belfast always fought in separate army units (e.g. the 36th Ulster Division and the 16th Irish Division).

Activity 04.2.d

Belfast soldiers



During WW1, Catholic and Protestant soldiers from Belfast always fought in separate army units (e.g. the 36th Ulster Division and the 16th Irish Division).

True

False

False

When the war broke out, many West Belfast men, Catholics and Protestants, were already in the British Army or Navy, having joined as professional soldiers years before. Many of these men had joined the local regiment, the Royal Irish Rifles, and were serving together in its 2nd Battalion.

Even the 36th Ulster Division and the 16th Irish Division did not contain only Protestants or Catholics. Some Ulster Division units welcomed Catholic recruits – the 14th Royal Irish Rifles (the Young Citizen Volunteers) had more than one hundred Catholics. The 16th Irish Division contained a number of English and Irish Protestants, especially among its officers.

Activity **04.2_d**

Belfast soldiers



What kind of men served in the 36th Ulster Division?

Activity 04.2.d

Belfast soldiers



What kind of men served in the 36th Ulster Division?

Hard-line Unionists

Socialists

Farmers and labourers from rural communities

All of the above

e) All of the above

The men of the 36th Ulster Division were not all exactly alike, they didn't all come from the same background, and some changed their views over time.

While most men were from Protestant/Unionist communities, their occupations and social class varied considerably. A significant example is Shankill man George McBride, who fought at the Battle of the Somme. Although an Orangeman and former UVF member, he was also a socialist who fought for workers' rights. After WW1 he returned to socialist politics and encountered Winifred Carney, James Connolly's secretary who had fought with him in the Easter Rising in Dublin. George and Winnie were married in 1928; he remained a Protestant socialist and she remained a Catholic socialist Nationalist.

When she died, Winnie Carney McBride's grave lay unmarked because her family did not approve of her marriage and did not want to put the "McBride" name on the headstone. A headstone erected in recent times also fails to mention her married name.



Activity **04.2_f**

Belfast soldiers



Whose motto is this?



Activity 04.2_f

Belfast soldiers



Whose motto is this?

a
West
Belfast Unionists
fighting in the Royal
Irish Rifles army
regiment

b
West
Belfast Nationalists
fighting in the
Connaught Rangers
army regiment

c
NEITHER

d
BOTH



d) Both

Quis Separabit (Who shall separate us?) was the motto of several Irish regiments in the British Army, including the Royal Irish Rifles and the Connaught Rangers. It was not until the 1970s that the motto became associated with Loyalist Paramilitaries.

Activity 04.2.g

Belfast soldiers

This picture was painted during World War One by the famous Belfast artist William Conor.

Rollover the correct caption.



b) The charge of the 16th Irish Division at the Battle of the Somme (Guillemont and Ginchy)

The same Irish troops charged into Ginchy as they had charged into Guillemont, through the barrage of shells and the storm of machine-gun fire, clambering over shell-holes, fallen trees, and the great mounds of bricks and rubble which were all that remained of the village itself; cheering like mad, and driving the enemy before them in a fierce assault against which nothing could stand.

c) The charge of both divisions at the Battle of Messines

The extent of our advance you will have learnt from the newspapers, and I hope you and all the world will have learnt also that the South Irish Division and the Ulster Division went forward side by side; - that they opened the battle.

Activity 04.2_h

Belfast soldiers



On the 90th anniversary of the Battle of the Somme, Beadle's famous painting of the 36th Ulster Division was used as a special commemorative postage stamp.

Who was the stamp issued by?



Activity 04.2_h

Belfast soldiers



On the 90th anniversary of the Battle of the Somme, Beadle's famous painting of the 36th Ulster Division was used as a special commemorative postage stamp.

Who was the stamp issued by?



b) The Irish postal service, An Post

Launching the special stamp, An Post said "it is sure to be in high demand as a poignant and sombre reminder of the tragic events and high losses suffered by both sides during that period of the First World War."

The Royal Mail said it would only issue stamps to mark the 50th or 100th anniversary of an event like the Battle of the Somme. A spokesman for the Orange Order said, "This response from Royal Mail was rather disappointing and contrasts with the response from An Post in the Republic of Ireland."

Activity 04.2_h

Belfast soldiers



During the Battle of the Somme, many Ulster Division soldiers wore Orange Order sashes as they went “over the top”.

Activity 04.2_h

Belfast soldiers



During the Battle of the Somme, many Ulster Division soldiers wore Orange Order sashes as they went “over the top”.

a
True

b
False

c
Hard to be sure

Hard to be sure

This is a popular story, but there is very little evidence of Ulster Division soldiers wearing Orange sashes. A few did at most. 50 years later an Ulster Division survivor wrote:

”What nonsense is stuck on to the story. Certainly Major Gaffikin waved an orange handkerchief, but orange was the colour of our battalion, the 9th (West Belfast) Royal Irish Rifles. If he had said (and if anybody could have heard him) “Come on, boys, this is the First of July!” – how many would have known the Boyne was fought on the First of July? ...Nothing was further from my mind than the Boyne on the Somme.”

Activity

04.2i

Belfast soldiers



Who suffered
the higher death
toll in April 1916?

Activity 04.2i

Belfast soldiers



Which suffered the higher death toll in April 1916?

a

The rebels fighting in Dublin during the Easter Rising

b

The Irish soldiers fighting in the 16th Irish Division on the Western Front

b) The Irish soldiers fighting in the 16th Irish Division on the Western Front

Approximately **64 rebels** were killed in Dublin. The **total death toll was around 450**, including 116 British troops (some of whom were Irish), 16 police and 250+ civilians.

In the month of April 1916 **538 soldiers of the 16th Irish Division were killed in action**, mostly by poison gas. (Most soldiers of the 16th Division were Irish Nationalists, and many had been Irish National Volunteers.)

Activity 04.2i

Belfast soldiers



Where can you go to visit the graves of West Belfast men who served in the British forces in World War One?

Activity 04.2.i



Belfast soldiers

Where can you go to visit the graves of West Belfast men who served in the British forces in World War One?

| | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| a Connaught Commonwealth War Graves Cemetery, Thiepval | b Guillemont Road Commonwealth War Graves Cemetery, Guillemont |
| c Wytchaete Commonwealth War Graves Cemetery, Messines | d Shankill Graveyard |
| e Milltown Cemetery | f All |

f) All

Soldiers killed in battle were buried close to where they fell, and Belfast soldiers can be found in Commonwealth War Graves Commission cemeteries on all the main WW1 battlefields.

However, some soldiers died of disease or wounds after they had been evacuated back to Britain (some even died shortly after the war ended). The bodies of these men were returned to Belfast for burial.

British soldiers have not been welcome in Milltown Cemetery for many decades, but this was not the case during WW1. In November 1916 Milltown witnessed a joint funeral for Privates J Quirk and E Cunningham of the Leinster Regiment. Both had been wounded at the Somme and died later in English hospitals. The band of the Royal Irish Rifles played while the men were buried, and soldiers fired a salute over the graves.

Activity 04.2k

Easter Rising



At the time of the Easter Rising, the wife and six children of Republican leader James Connolly still lived at Glenalina Terrace on the Falls Road. During Easter week the house was empty as Connolly had sent his wife and younger children to a cottage near Dublin (the older children were involved in Republican activities during the Rising).

How did local people react to news of the Connolly family's involvement in the Easter Rising in Dublin?

Activity 04.2_k

Easter Rising



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How did local people react to news of the Connolly family's involvement in the Easter Rising in Dublin?

a
Hung flowers and messages of support around the door

b
Flung rocks and bottles at the house

c
Placed an armed guard around the house to prevent the police from entering it

b) Flung rocks and bottles at the house

Angry at the news from Dublin, local dock workers and their wives attacked the house, pelting it with missiles. A friend of the family had to board up the windows to prevent further damage. The attackers were almost certainly Catholics – most dockers were – and presumably felt that the Rising was a betrayal of Irishmen fighting in France.)

Activity 04.2k

Easter Rising



In the wake of the Easter Rising, Republicans suffered severe discrimination at the hands of Protestant employers.

Activity 04.2_k

Easter Rising



In the wake of the Easter Rising, Republicans suffered severe discrimination at the hands of Protestant employers.

a
True

b
False

c
Depends who you ask

c) Depends who you ask

Unionists blamed the Sinn Fein Party for the Easter Rising and tended to label all Republicans as “Sinn Feiners”. In many cases Republicans felt that they were unfairly sacked or denied work because of their political beliefs, but the truth was often less clear cut.

Elizabeth Corr travelled from Dublin to Coalisland on Easter Monday with orders for the Northern Volunteers. Finding that the Volunteers had dispersed and gone home, she stayed in County Tyrone waiting for further news and finally returned home to Belfast on Thursday 27th April. Corr said:

I was employed by the Belfast Corporation as a typist in the Central Public Library, and I was dismissed because I was a Sinn Feiner.’

Elizabeth Corr Belfast Nationalist

However, the official record of Corr’s dismissal does not mention her Republican views. According to the letter of notice, she was sacked for being absent from work without leave during Easter week. Her explanation, that she had been trapped in “hostile country” was not considered satisfactory by her employers. On the other hand, several other members of staff were also absent due to transport disruption in Dublin, and their excuses were accepted.

Activity

04.3_a

Peelers



The police
of the time...

Activity 04.3_a

Peelers



The police of the time...



g) None of the above

Most RIC officers were Catholic. Even one of the alleged murder gang was a Catholic. When the RUC was formed, 40% of officers were Catholic.

Many policemen had nationalist sympathies. Some even acted as agents for the IRA, using their position to steal classified information which could help the IRA.

RIC men were always assigned to districts far from their home town. Many Belfast "Peelers" actually came from southern counties, and even the ones who came from Ulster were not from Belfast itself.

In January 1922 the new NI Minister for Home Affairs, Unionist Richard Dawson Bates, complained about the RIC:

During the disturbances in the South of Ireland large numbers of the better type of [RIC] men were drafted to the South and men who could not be trusted or who were inefficient were sent into Belfast. Over 50 per cent of the force in the city are Roman Catholics, mainly from the South, and many of them are known to be related to Sinn Fein.

There were undoubtedly some sectarian Protestant policemen. More importantly, the Ulster Special Constabulary were entirely Protestant (a small handful of Catholics joined but most quickly left again). Among Catholics, the B-Specials in particular earned a reputation similar to the Black and Tans in the South – ill disciplined, bigoted and aggressive.

However, even the B Specials were not always as biased as their toxic reputation implied. On some occasions they took pains to appear as even-handed as possible.

Richard Dawson Bates
NI Minister for Home Affairs



Activity

04.3_b

Conflagration



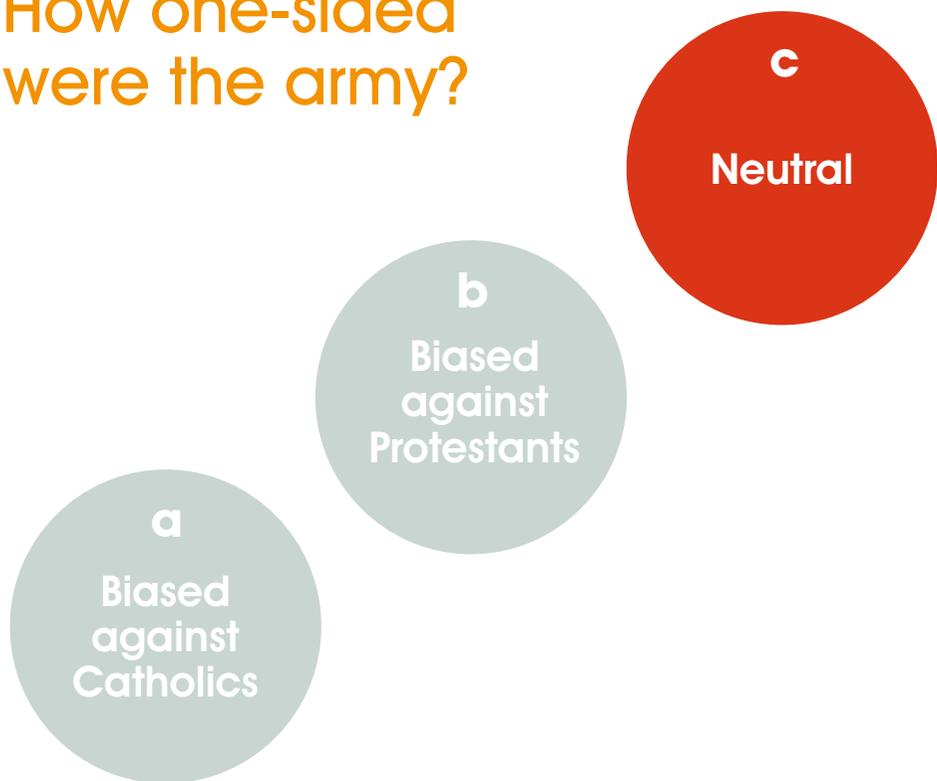
How one-sided
were the army?

Activity **04.3_b**

Conflagration



How one-sided were the army?



c) Neutral

In Belfast, the army's attitude to the conflict was generally neutral, deploying the same methods to counter violent activity from loyalists and Republicans. In fact, soldiers often displayed greater hostility towards loyalists, and towards any biased police activities that they encountered.

One of the IRA's top commanders, Roger McCorley, said:

"The British troops kept a more or less neutral attitude but the Special Constabulary continued to carry out attacks on the Nationalist areas. These took the form principally of sniping by 'B' and 'C' class Specials into the Nationalist areas.

Roger McCorley
IRA's Commander