



Events which change the course of human affairs are the great landmarks of history, yet seldom are they recorded in human terms. While the Great War—the war to end all wars—was not conclusive, it changed, to a degree that can never be measured, the history of the Province of Ulster. Yet how much do we really know of the Ulstermen of 1914-1918?

One Man's War

Somewhere between the soulless 'official' accounts of those years and the heart-rending verses of soldier poets like Brooke and Owen there is a gap in our knowledge of the men who died on the battlefields of France. Of the Ulster Division we know little or nothing for old soldiers have tired of their memories of battle and we had few fighting men of literary bent to record the heroism of those who fell.

Somme Anniversary
On July 1 we will commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Battle of the Somme—a date which saw the worst battle of the war if not of all history—when many thousands of Ulstermen lost their lives. What were they like, these lads who... laughed in the face of Death. Above the roar of the cannon's breath Singing their sacred shibboleth 'The Boyne' and 'No Surrender'?

As they charged into strong enemy positions at Thiepval? "How men could live in such a tornado of fire," a news report said after the battle, "is beyond all belief, and while they suffered enormous losses the survivors still went on, taking trench after trench. They also captured and brought back nearly 600 prisoners, but many were caught by German fire before they could be got to our lines. The Hun paid the price bitterly, and they will have reason to remember the Ulster fighting men for generations."

One Belfastman who survived Thiepval may one day receive credit for increasing our knowledge of the men of the Ulster Division—why they fought and what they believed they were fighting for; their concern for one another and for the good name of their regiments; their curious boyish humour and their faith in their leaders...

Unique Record
The Diaries of Jim Mautsайд must be unique among the records of the First World War. They fill five large volumes, are written in clear long-hand and illustrated competently by his own pen.

'Funny Soldiering'
It was funny soldiering. Some, every evening, and no uniform. An old and railway-keen, Jim's knowledge of the country roads of Ulster...

PART 1 'The Great Adventure'

Young Jim Mautsайд on Monday, August 5th, 1914 when he attempted to join up. Jim's answer was 'unacceptable'... He could not meet on two feet weighing in or around nine and a half stone. He had been an athlete and his life and felt cramped to land a short eight into the sergeant's queue midriff!

Making his disconcerting way down town Jim fell in with some chums who were all 'Young Citizen Volunteers' and was impressed by the fact that they were being taken over as a complete battalion of the Royal Irish Rifles.

Jumping at the chance to join them Jim soon found himself at the Old Town Hall for his medical. Most of the volunteers were still boys between 16 and 22, and they spent their first few weeks drilling in Davidson's 'Yard on the Mountpotting Road.

Whether the reporter's friend ever realised his ambition or not, Private Jim Mautsайд became L/Cpl. Mautsайд soon after being posted to Randalstown camp (Wooden huts. Some change for us. A good camp! It was now April, 1915. On May 8, he recorded in his diary: "Ulster Division in full war paint. Marched all the way from Randalstown to Belfast for Review.

First Stripe
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'Men—Not boys'
"It's men the Skin's want, not boys!" This was how the overweight, red-nosed recruiting sergeant at Clifton Street greeted

When Jim Mautsайд joined Kitchener's army in 1914 he at once began to keep a record of his experiences. Over the years his journal grew until it filled several large volumes, one of which is pictured here. Through these notes, photographs, sketches and cuttings RALPH ALLEN traces the path which led Jim and his 'chums' to the slopes of Thiepval and the terrible Battle of the Somme...



No. 16873 Mautsайд war. All of the said. His diaries sketches on these must be unique pages are his, most among the records drawn while he was of the first world on active service.

Historic Entries
Two entries in the diary of special, perhaps historic, interest, are brief and to the point:
20th July—Were inspected by the great Lord Kitchener himself. Pleased? He was delighted with us. Do coming events cast their shadows before? Are we for foreign service?
5th August—Sir Edward Carson paid us a visit. He said K. of K. (Kitchener of Khartoum) told him we were far too good to be at home...

If Kitchener's inspection was only a 'shadow' of things to come, the review of the battalion by King George himself removed any vestige of uncertainty. The '14th' were ready to do battle.
On October 3 a troop-ship slid silently out from Southampton carrying Jim Mautsайд and his 'chums' to war. His reaction, as his diary records, was characteristic. 'Hurrah.'

Next Week: 'Marching to War'



It is not clear at what stage one ceased to be a Young Citizen Volunteer and became a 'soldier of the King' Jim Mautsайд was turned down by the official recruiting office but was accepted without question by the Y.C.V., which everyone knew was to be taken over as a battalion of the Royal Irish Rifles. The picture below of the Y.C.V. at Finner Camp, Co. Donegal, shows just how 'young' some of the Volunteers were. The front two rows are in Y.C.V. uniform.



One Man's War

From the war diaries of Jim Maultsaid, Belfast, who survived some of the most heroic actions of the first world war, RALPH ALLEN recalls the story of the Young Citizen Volunteers who later became the 14th Royal Irish Rifles.

PART 2 tells of their arrival in France and their long march to the Front along the valley of the River Somme . . .

MARCHING TO WAR

IT was October 14, 1915. The troopship bearing the 14th Royal Irish Rifles (Young Citizen Volunteers) was preparing to discharge its cargo of Ulstermen, many of them teenagers, on the quay at Le Havre.

My first glimpse of this strange land, wrote L/Cpl. Jim Maultsaid in his diary, was a long line of sheds and French soldiers in red (yes, RED trousers).

more accurately. French mud. Six inches of black, black mud. Weary, tired and miserable, the night passed. We were 20 or 25 to a tent.

It was almost with relief that Jim and his comrades responded to revivify the following morning. They scraped and washed their kit—and themselves—and moved on soon. Away from Le Havre and the mud and the overcrowded camp. So when the order arrived to pack up and prepare to get under way, even though their destination might be the battlefield, they fell in cheerfully for the march to the railway station.



French experts

Awaiting them was a long line of railway trucks, each marked 30 hommes. Already the budding linguists were airing their knowledge of French—and attracting the derision of their companions. "Twenty men, this meant, according to our supposed experts," Jim records.

(Apart from a small vocabulary of "pidgin" French which he brought home as he would a souvenir of the war, the average Ulsterman soon gave up trying to master the pure French vowels and was, like his English counterparts, content to let "Madamezell from Armateers parleyvo" mark the height of his linguistic prowess.

The element of invented snobbery also restrained the "supposed experts" from airing their knowledge and a regiment of fighting men suddenly found themselves unable to communicate. Where and why had the interpreter left the column? No one seemed to know.

FACING JERRY.
SHAKING the dust of Beaulieu from our feet (or mud) we stroked that last loss.

One of his amusing chapter headings. Each page of Jim Maultsaid's diary reflects something of himself. This is the account of his first posting to the front line. As his rapid promotion clearly showed, he was never guilty of 'shaking' when he faced danger on the battlefield.

The night march

"Were we lost?" That is the heading in Jim's diary. The French interpreter had suddenly vanished and a regiment of fighting men suddenly found themselves unable to communicate. Where and why had the interpreter left the column? No one seemed to know.



Next day brought an improvement in Jim's accommodation, when his section were moved into a small house. The only drawback was that it adjoined the local graveyard. Still it was clean and neat, the diary recalls, and the cold did not blow through it like the big barns.

Another Stripe

If it was at this juncture that Jim Maultsaid got his next promotion. Lieutenant Monard informed me that I was now Corporal "Maultsaid," he wrote in his journal. It also marked the end of a conflict of personalities. "When I got my first stripe I was under Lieut. Monard. Wedgwood (much) to my sorrow, he was only 17 or so and we were great friends." Since that time I was under Lieut. Monard and although I did not agree in many ways with his style I admired him.

Marching songs

Here the important part of the song. The lyrics were: "The night march was a long one, the night march was a long one, the night march was a long one." The lyrics were: "The night march was a long one, the night march was a long one, the night march was a long one."

The last journey

"We started the last journey," Jim wrote. The entry had a prophetic meeting for many of his comrades. As they resumed their long march the noise of war increased. "Shaking the dust of Beaulieu from our feet—or was it mud?—we started the journey that was to find us opposite the Germans and to see this was the most momentous of moments."



Some of the 11th Battalion Inniskilling Fusiliers, part of the famous 109th Brigade. This is one of Jim Maultsaid's collection of photographs of regiments other than his own (the 14th RIR).



A group of Jim's 'chums' at Randalstown Camp. He has written in the names of those who served with him—later in France.



This is Beaulieu, where Jim Maultsaid made his first French friends. Like him they were Protestant and their common faith came as a surprise to each. Though poor, they were happy to share their food with him, for they had lost a son already at the front. Jim's diary does not name them for he spent only a few days at Beaulieu before leaving for the front line himself. He never saw or heard from them again.

BELFAST Newlyweds



Mr. John Paul Robinson, 69 Vicarage Street, and Miss Maureen Thompson, 20 Saunders Street. They were married in Westbourne Presbyterian Church. Photo by A. J. M. Studios.



Mr. Leslie Waller, 46 Conast Street, Lisburn Road, and Miss Doreen Cairns, 28 Minnowburn Drive, Milltown, Shaw's Bridge, after their wedding in St. Thomas's Church. Photo by the Ashleigh Studio.



Mr. Edgar Ross, 21 Bridge Down, Briggis, Nr. Canterbury, and Miss Dorothy McGowan, 59 Haywood Avenue. They were married in Osborne Park Methodist Church. Photo by Jay's Studios.

Next week

STAR SHELL REFLECTIONS

One Man's War



A force bombardment on 6th April, 1916, in which many men of the 14th died. One of those who fell was Jim Maultsald's dear friend, Billy Reid.

Not a popular job—Repairing the wire which had been gapped by enemy shellfire during the day, the wiring party were in constant danger. 'You don't breathe easy until your body slides back into the trench again' wrote Jim Maultsald.

Fully trained and conditioned for battle the 14th R.I.R. (Y.C.V.) had arrived in the front line trenches. A figure, muffled against the cold night air, greeted Jim Maultsald and his comrades with: 'You Irish, clum?' It was indeed a greeting rather than a question for there were already many Ulstermen in the Somme sector and it was unlikely that the arrival of the Young Citizen Volunteers was unheralded.

Any questions were in order for the 14th had much to learn—and quickly. All the posts were double-maned that night—a Warwickshire Terrier and an Ulsterman to each—within the law and the lore of the trenches were explained. Jim Maultsald's diary records: 'It was intensely interesting. The night slowly faded away. The dawn came. It was awe-inspiring. The bullets began to whizz overhead. From a few hundred yards away Jerry was sending his morning greeting across No Man's Land. Muzzling the firing step Jim replied with his first shot towards the enemy lines which appeared to him as a long white line of chalk with a wood of skeleton trees behind it.

First Breakfast
It's wonderful how a drop of tea takes that low down sinking feeling from the pit of one's stomach. Jim wrote when he recorded that first breakfast in the trenches. It consisted of 'tea, 'dipped' bread and some fat bacon. Simple fare but the men of the 14th would live on much cruder rations before very long.

There are very few references to Jim Maultsald's journals to the accounts which began at once and understandable. It is un-likely to describe how these boys died that's something we keep to ourselves. These thoughts are sacred. But he recorded the audience which was felt when the stretcher-bearers passed

down the trench with their burdens 'for a little grave in a quiet spot of some little French graveyard'. A figure, muffled against the cold night air, greeted Jim Maultsald and his comrades with: 'You Irish, clum?' It was indeed a greeting rather than a question for there were already many Ulstermen in the Somme sector and it was unlikely that the arrival of the Young Citizen Volunteers was unheralded.

A Chum is Killed
There is one page however devoted to his pal, Willie Reid, killed on April 6, 1916. 'They told me next morning. He died firing his machine gun. All that was found of him was his right hand clasping the trigger of his gun. That old red head would dodge my punches no more (we often had a few rounds with the gloves), no more would I share my little parcels from home with him. This was my greatest loss so far.'

Comrades are remembered for different reasons—not always because they died in battle. Joe Montgomery, though he was killed later in Flanders, survives in Jim Maultsald's record because he was a golly man who, by word and action set us an example. His little sermons always carried weight. Joe always read his pocket Bible before retiring. 'I can see him yet in tent, billet, and dug-out as he has a final paragraph finished, under his pillow, then gets down on knees to say his prayers. Even the card-playing, swearing roughneck usually had a soft spot for the religious man and his ways. Even if he happened to be a German!

Devout Enemy
They had been in the front line trenches for a week and were preparing to hand over to a relief battalion. It was Sunday morning. We were summoned to hear the singing of hymns and the playing of concertinas from across No Man's Land—in perfect harmony. Needless to say we did not interrupt to say we did not like it. They were sacred time to them (the enemy) and they believed it and they were afraid to praise Him even in the Front Line trenches.'

This is not the only charitable reference to the enemy in the Maultsald's journals. Assessing the fighting merits of the enemy, he wrote: 'The German were good soldiers. Generally overfed by their superior officers but better fighters than the mass than in small lots. The French were summed up as 'Wood when the day was going well for them but for



oes. One such occasion is recorded in amazing detail in the Maultsald diary under the heading 'The Night Patrol'. 'A machine-gun nest had been giving us a great deal of trouble. Orders had been received from H.Q. to send out a patrol and it possible to locate it. My old friend Mr. Wedgwood, platoon officer of No. 15 Platoon, informed me and asked me to accompany him that night. We came all our badges, numerals and tall-tale marks. Faces were blackened. Big six-shooters oiled, cleaned and loaded up. 'It was dark and miserable as we crawled through our wire after giving the word to our sentries not to do any shooting and to watch for our return. The objective was on a railway embankment that ran into the hole to shell-hole we moved on. In one of these, some poor unfortunates had lain for months. We passed at our best speed. 'Heavens above—' what a flash! I was rooted to the spot—could not move a finger! It had burst a hole behind us, that awful star shell—brighter than daylight—and we lay revealed. 'What a sight me and my mates! Straight down the muzzle we looked and the gun crew were just as incapable of movement as ourselves. Not a shadow of doubt burst on us. 'Action came to us first and we literally threw ourselves over the embankment. The gun flashed stabbed the darkness—but the target had gone. 'A wild tumble, head over heels, and we were shot to the bottom of the slope. 'I sank them like a bolt from the sky. They were in the middle of a general pursuit. They not they knew our code they see what had struck them a wild stampede and they bolted like mad—so did we! 'That machine gun was still spluttering as we dropped into our own front-line trench. It was a great deal of movement in the village. We did not notice that Jerry was moving up as sending over a perfect hail of shells at times—mostly when we were moving up to the front line trenches. 'One fine morning the hands were gone 'clean off.' A mystery?

From JIM MAULTSALD'S diary. RALPH ALLEN extracts a graphic account of the skirmishing before the battle of the Somme.

Machine-gun trouble
'A machine-gun nest had been giving us a great deal of trouble. Orders had been received from H.Q. to send out a patrol and it possible to locate it. My old friend Mr. Wedgwood, platoon officer of No. 15 Platoon, informed me and asked me to accompany him that night. We came all our badges, numerals and tall-tale marks. Faces were blackened. Big six-shooters oiled, cleaned and loaded up. 'It was dark and miserable as we crawled through our wire after giving the word to our sentries not to do any shooting and to watch for our return. The objective was on a railway embankment that ran into the hole to shell-hole we moved on. In one of these, some poor unfortunates had lain for months. We passed at our best speed. 'Heavens above—' what a flash! I was rooted to the spot—could not move a finger! It had burst a hole behind us, that awful star shell—brighter than daylight—and we lay revealed. 'What a sight me and my mates! Straight down the muzzle we looked and the gun crew were just as incapable of movement as ourselves. Not a shadow of doubt burst on us. 'Action came to us first and we literally threw ourselves over the embankment. The gun flashed stabbed the darkness—but the target had gone. 'A wild tumble, head over heels, and we were shot to the bottom of the slope. 'I sank them like a bolt from the sky. They were in the middle of a general pursuit. They not they knew our code they see what had struck them a wild stampede and they bolted like mad—so did we! 'That machine gun was still spluttering as we dropped into our own front-line trench. It was a great deal of movement in the village. We did not notice that Jerry was moving up as sending over a perfect hail of shells at times—mostly when we were moving up to the front line trenches. 'One fine morning the hands were gone 'clean off.' A mystery?

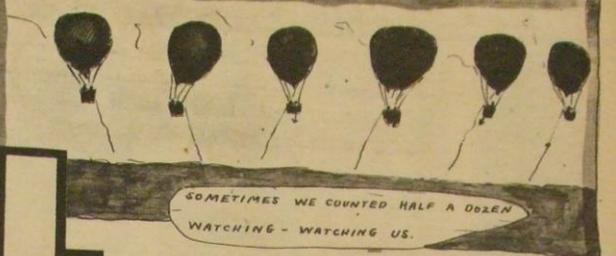
Background Story
Many years afterwards, at a reunion of the Battalion, the story of these hands was told by their adjutant, Captain Mulholland. It appears that the irregular timekeeping of this clock had caused some speculation among the officers and one dark night with considerable daring, someone scaled the tower and removed the hands. Eventually they found their way back to Ireland and long afterwards were returned to the Mayor of Messin-Martinstart.

It was believed that an enemy agent was using the hands of the church clock. It was in fact a church, not a 'town hall' to paraphrase details of troop movements to German artillery who were thereby enabled to strafe reserves making their way up the line. When the hands were returned the mayor of Messin-Martinstart wrote: 'We shall be pleased to see them again, for, alas, for us, as for you, these hands have marked sad and tragic moments.'

'Spy' stories like this are not so fantastic when it is remembered that German Intelligence had been pouring money into France to pay traitors and dissidents who were trying to destroy the Allied war effort.

Watch on the Somme
By late spring of 1916 the German general staff was keeping a very close watch on the Somme Front. They had known for some time that an allied offensive was inevitable and all the signs were now pointing to an all-out effort on the part of the Allies with greater accuracy than the village clock, German observation balloons now appeared on the skyline to keep a check on Allied activities. Bombing from the air was now being used in an effort to break the huge supply lines—often with devastating success.

Haig Visits the Y.C.V.
For the Ulstermen the arrival of Sir Douglas Haig in their midst was a clear signal that the 'big day' was not far away. Sergeant Jim Maultsald was a member of the 14th and a Mills bomb into a target area 50 yards away with deadly accuracy. Haig wanted a demonstration and he got it. 'Very good, sergeant. Now let me see your men when we were moving up. I picked my crack throwers. Bang, bang, bang! All



SOMETIMES WE COUNTED HALF A DOZEN WATCHING - WATCHING US.

When the enemy began to take a serious interest in the Somme Front, these observation balloons were much in evidence. They were easy targets for our fighter aircraft.

REBELS IN THE TRENCHES

the 14th had spells of relief behind the lines. During this time, euphemistically called 'rest periods', they were kept occupied on various fatigues. Probably using a little elementary psychology, the Army allowed them little time to brood. One day they would be felling trees ('I loved the forests and often hoped for did it fall to my lot again'). Then they would be repairing houses or barns, probably for use as billets. 'It was rough and ready work but it was interesting. Far, far better fun than parades or route marches.'

But of course not everyone was cut out for house repair work. 'Daddy' McHride took charge of building a wall and after a morning's work a crash like a bursting shell. 'Chers went up as 'Dad' was a 'know-all' and a bit on the aggressive side, so 'I gave great satisfaction to some of the troops.'

There was always an opportunity while on relief to make contact with the local people, particularly shopkeepers and traders. But even this apparently uncomplicated relationship was sometimes fraught with suspicion.

In an unidentified village 14 Platoon spent most of their hard-earned francs in a 'wee shop' where the goods on display were not the main attraction. 'She was a fine, big strapping lass, Jim Maultsald records. 'A real blonde—but I noticed she did not show her hands a great deal...'

But one fine morning it was a case of shutters up and the wee shop was 'napped'. No one knew of ever found out, but the story goes that 'she' was a German spy, all dressed up as a French lassie and 'she' was a man!

A more fully documented episode, though no less incredible, is the story of the village clock at the village of Messin, near Martinstart, which ticked much more than the time of day. 'Not all of us paid much attention to the clock on top of that old town hall. Near enough to the firing line, it could be quite hot at times and as the district was a reserve line for weary troops there was always a great deal of movement in the village. We did not notice that Jerry was moving up as sending over a perfect hail of shells at times—mostly when we were moving up to the front line trenches. 'One fine morning the hands were gone 'clean off.' A mystery?

Moving from one position to another along the front.

bullets. I was delighted,' records Jim in his journal. 'Are your boys all Irish men, sergeant?' asked the 'Big Chief'. 'Yes sir.' 'You see I see now why you are all such good bombers.' The remark, made to a group of Young Citizen Volunteers, was so incredibly innocent that it was probably taken as a joke. 'This was to be my one and only 'close-up' of our

leader during my Army career,' wrote Jim Maultsald. 'A fine inspiring figure of a man, but his face! I got a shock. To me it looked as if it had been powdered.'

All the training and the practice—if not the inspiration—were to be put to good account in a few weeks' time. The next Front Line position the 14th were to defend was—Thiepval Wood.

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THE VILLAGE CLOCK
A TRUE STORY OF THE WAR

Next Week THE BATTLE

The mystery of the church clock at Messin-Martinstart—Were the Germans receiving signals

LETTER TO EDITOR
Mrs. Agnes Fisher, 5 Wandsworth Road, Belmont, Belfast, writes regarding 'One Man's War'. It was a surprise to see my late brother's photo on the cover of City Week. I know he was known as 'Porky' Black, his real name was Stanley Black. I see by the photo Stanley Black is in it. It is hardly likely there were two Stanley Blacks in 'D' Company.—Ed.