

IRISH VOLUNTEERS AND MILITIA.

MEDALS, BELT PLATES AND SHAKO PLATES.

BY CHARLES WINTER.

HE 1st July, 1766, is the date given by R. P. Berry, in his *History of the Volunteer Infantry*, for the first volunteers of Ireland. They were formed to resist the French invasion, and wore scarlet uniforms with blue facings.

This small beginning so rapidly grew that by the year 1782 the Irish volunteers had become a formidable force, and numbered 100,887 men, with 130 pieces of artillery. But not many years afterwards this national army of volunteers ceased to exist. Most of the corps were named after the guild, society or town from which they were formed, as will be noticed by the names on the medals and belt plates.

The medals are mostly engraved, are very rare, and were presented for skill at arms, good conduct, and competitive shooting. The belt and shako plates formed part of the uniform, and the former were worn on the sword cross-belt, as shown in the miniature portraits of officers which I exhibit. I have also included in the exhibits two interesting shako plates.

The information respecting the various corps is very meagre, and therefore I can only give the description of the various medals and plates.

LIBERTY VOLUNTEERS.

Medal.

A silver, oval, engraved medal with broad, flat border and loop at top.

Obverse.—A round tower with flag, and flames issuing from the front. Motto: PAX LIBERTATIS ∴ INCENDIUM ∴ GLORÆ. Exergue: LIBERTY VOLUNTEERS.

Reverse.—AWARDED TO PATRICK LEARY BY SIR E. NEWENHAM 1780. FOR ZEALOUS CONDUCT IN THE CAUSE OF FREEDOM.

Sir Edward Newenham was the Colonel of the above Corps. Its uniform was scarlet with pea green facings.

INDEPENDENT BALLYROOM CAVALRY.

Medal.

A silver, circular, engraved medal with broad, flat border and loop.

Obverse.—In the centre two lances in saltire; above, the Irish harp without figure or crown under the motto LET ERIN LIVE; below, INDEPENDENT BALLYROOM CAVALRY.

Reverse.—1st WON BY Mr. J. O'CONNOR IN DISPLAY OF BROADSWORD EXERCISE.

This Corps was raised in 1796.

KILWORTH LIGHT DRAGOONS.

Medal.

A silver, oval medal with chased border, ring at top.

Obverse.—The Irish harp with winged figure, no crown, within a laurel wreath; above, KILWORTH; below, 2nd TROOP LIGHT DRAGOONS.

Reverse.—MERIT AT SWORD EXERCISE. AWARDED TO MICHL. MURPHY BEST SWORDSMAN 1780.

The Colonel of the Corps was Stephen, Earl Mountcashel.

It was raised in 1779. The uniform was scarlet with green facings and gold epaulets.

ROYAL TYRONE REGIMENT.

Medals.

Gold, circular medal mounted in glass, with gold rim and ornamented loop.

Obverse.—The Irish harp with winged figure, crowned, within a laurel wreath, two scrolls above the wreath and dividing the words GOD SAVE THE KING; a small star at base.

Reverse.—FOR SOLDIERLY MERIT within a laurel wreath, two scrolls and two small five-pointed stars dividing the words ROYAL TYRONE REGT.

Another, in silver, with steel clip and large split ring for suspender.

Edge engraved T. HORAN.

CARTON CAVALRY.

Belt Plate.

Oblong, engraved, gilt plate with grained border.

The Irish harp with winged figure full face, crowned and dividing the date 1796, the whole between two ribands inscribed CARTON CAVALRY.

LAWYERS CAVALRY.

Belt Plate.

Oblong, gilt, engraved plate.

The Irish harp with winged figure in profile, crowned between two ribands inscribed PRO REGE ET PATRIA LAWYERS CAVALRY.

MARYBOROUGH CAVALRY.

Belt Plate.

Oblong, "old Sheffield," engraved plate.

The Irish harp with winged figure in profile, crowned, between two ribands inscribed MARYBOROUGH CAVALRY.

WATERFORD.

Belt Plate.

A handsome silver plate, engraved, which has been ascribed to Waterford.

It is an oblong, silver plate with three dolphins on an ornamented shield formed of scrolls with floral surrounds; below, motto DEO PROSPICIENTE FLOREBIT.

I have referred to the "Book of Public Arms," but the only suggestion from the Arms of Waterford that could be associated with this plate is the supporter on the dexter side—a dolphin.

I do not know who is responsible for placing it as Waterford, but the plate came from the late Mr. Panter's collection.

ROYAL DUBLIN VOLUNTEERS.

Medal and Four Plates.

Large oval, silver, engraved medal with loop, formed of two thin plates, domed.

Obverse.—The Irish harp with winged figure in profile, crowned and dividing the letters G. R.; above KING & CONSTITUTION.

Reverse.—PRESENTED BY CAPT. FERGUSON 3rd COMPY. 1st REGT. R. D. V. TO Mr. GEO. RICHD. LODGE FOR SUPERIOR FIRING AT THE TARGET.

Belt Plates.

1. Oval, gilt, engraved plate.

The Irish harp with winged figure full face, crowned and dividing two ovals inscribed 1st REGT.; below the harp the date 1796; the whole between two ribands inscribed ROYAL DUBLIN VOLUNTEERS.

2. Oval, silver, engraved plate.

The Irish harp with winged figure in profile and dividing the letters 2^D REGT.; below the harp the date 1796; the whole between two ribands inscribed ROYAL DUBLIN VOLUNTEERS. Maker's mark S.T.

3. A smaller plate than No. 2 with ends of ribands spread out. Oval, silver, engraved plate with grained border.

The Irish harp with winged figure, in profile, crowned between two ribands inscribed DUBLIN VOLUNTEERS.

4. Oval, gilt plate with grained border, with ends of ribands spread out.

In the centre in high relief a silver harp with winged figure in profile, crowned between two ribands engraved DUBLIN VOLUNTEERS.

LINEN HALL CORPS.

Belt Plate.

- Oval, silver, engraved plate.

The Irish harp with winged figure, in profile, crowned and dividing the date 1796, the whole between two ribands inscribed LINEN HALL CORPS.

LIBERTY RANGERS.

Belt Plate.

Oval, gilt, engraved plate.

The Irish harp with winged figure, in profile, crowned and dividing two ornamented ovals engraved with the date 1796, the whole between two ribands inscribed LIBERTY RANGERS.

OYSTER HAVEN INFANTRY.

Belt Plate.

Oval, gilt plate.

The Irish harp with winged figure, in profile, crowned, between two ribands inscribed OYSTER HAVEN INFANTRY.

BANDON UNION.

Belt and Shako Plates.

1. Oval, "old Sheffield," engraved plate.

The Irish harp with winged figure in profile, crowned and dividing the letters G. R. The whole between two ribands inscribed BANDON UNION YEOMANRY.

2. Oval, pierced plate.

Bandon Bridge and three towers with a flag flying on each, the whole within a feathered border. Worn *circa* 1796.

CORK MILITIA.

Gorget.

Silver, engraved double gorget.

The Royal Arms dividing the letters G. R., above, the Irish harp with winged figure in profile dividing the letters C. M.

KING'S COUNTY MILITIA.

Medal and Shako Plate.

A finely engraved silver medal with ornamented border.

Obverse.—The Irish harp in the centre of a grenade, crowned within a wreath of laurel and shamrock; below, a riband inscribed KING'S COUNTY MILITIA.

Reverse.—In three lines—MAJOR MARLEY NEWTON BARRY JUNE 2nd 1798.

Gilt plate struck in relief.

In the centre a double monogram G.R.; above, a Royal crown; below, a silver shamrock. Worn 1807–1820.

POPE PIUS IX IRISH BRIGADE.

Badges.

1. Gold and enamelled circular badge with gold suspender formed of palm leaves.

Obverse.—A red enamelled Latin cross reversed within a circle formed of a serpent with its tail in its mouth. PRO PETRI SEDE PIO. IX. P.M.A. XV. in gold letters on a blue ground.

Reverse.—VICTORIA QVAE VINCIT MVNDVM FIDES NOSTRA in black letters on gold ground.

Riband—Red with two white stripes edged with yellow.

2. Another, in silver, struck in relief, with bar formed of acorns and oak leaf, inscribed ANCONA.

3. Another, base metal, without bar.

