

# Curragh History Archives



## Irish Times Article

**Saturday May 17th 1919**

### The Curragh Camp

As so many of your students have served in the forces, at home and abroad, perhaps some brief remarks, about the Curragh, now the largest and most active military training centre in Ireland would be of some interest.

About two miles from the town of Kildare is a grassy, treeless plain of about 4,658 acres, known as the Curragh of Kildare. It is not a flat tract of land, but has a series of hills and hollows, and in parts studded with gorse bushes. From east to west it measures about five miles and in breadth only two. It is supposed, and with some justice, that at one time the Curragh was a sheet of water, hence its sandy and uneven soil.

In 1234 history records that young Richard Marshal was slain at the Curragh. Many raths are to be seen, the chief being the Gibbet Rath, Big Rath, and Little Rath. During the '98 Rebellion' a number of rebels were slain, and their bodies interred on the hill, Gibbet Rath. To the east side of the Curragh lies a little valley known as Donnelly's Hollow, where in 1815 Donnelly defeated Cooper. A small monument marks the spot, and the wrestlers' footprints are still visible though, perhaps, considerable larger than when first planted there.

In 1854 the Curragh, for the first time, became a military station, though only a small camp of canvas. In the years 1868 and 1870 the War Department, by Act of Parliament, were granted permission to build on a portion of this plain, now known as the Curragh Camp. Very soon the canvas camp was supplanted by quaint wooden huts, red with black roofs. Later these were abolished, and to-day the camp is a succession of barracks after barracks of red brick, and some of stone, buildings. This camp accommodates about 1,200 men. In 1915, during the summer season, there were up to 2,800 men quartered there.

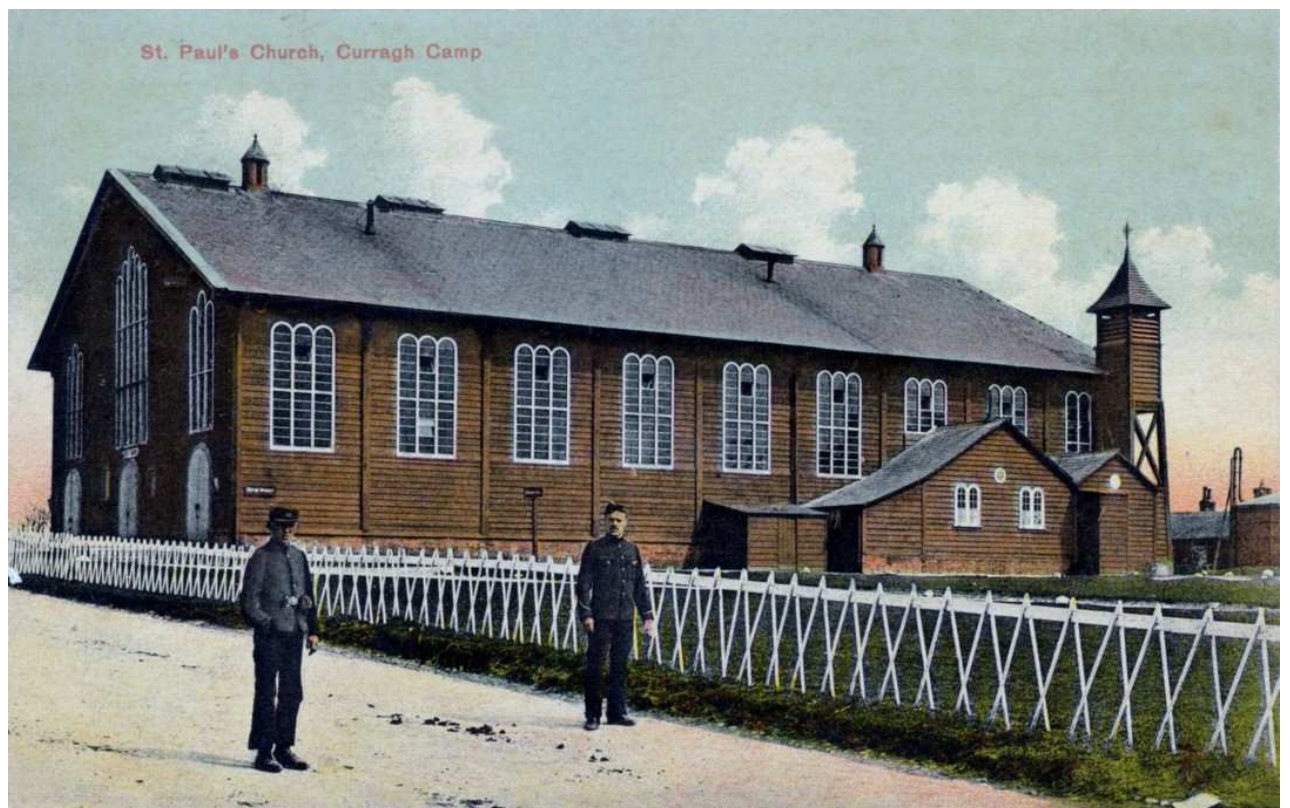
In actual life a description of the Curragh might interest. Away to the right soldiers practice warfare amongst the hills and valleys. Signalling is carried on from the various heights. Aeroplanes hover around. Gun firing resounds on all sides, to the average passer-by one feels amid the more stirring episodes of the actual battlefield.

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Far ahead the cavalry are seen going over the hills, while the artillery gallops past, leaving a stream of blinding dust behind. In the distance the strains of music band practice can be heard. Here and there a drill sergeant is heard, not always in a sweet temper, giving instructions to a squadron of men on some barrack square/ On the other hand, it is possible to spend a pleasant hour watching these energetic, khaki clad warriors enjoying a game of football or cricket in their 'off time' . The Curragh boasts a fine golf links, tennis, and cricket grounds: so amid the preparation for war, defence. And safety "Tommy Atkins" is essentially a lover of peace! Such are a few of the familiar sights and sounds at the Curragh of Kildare.

Yours Sincerely

INEZ G. EVANS



**St Paul's Church Curragh Camp**