

Curragh History Archives



Irish Times Tuesday 24th April 1906

Funeral of Lieutenant General Morton

The Curragh, Monday.

This afternoon the remains of Lieutenant General Sir G. de C. Morton were interred with all the honours befitting his rank in the Military Cemetery, about a mile and a half distant from the camp at the Curragh. The funeral cortege was an exceptionally large one, and its representative character indicated the esteem in which the deceased was held by his brother officers and by the men of the different regiments quartered in the district. His sympathy with those under his command, his unflinching kindness in their behalf won for him a measure of popularity which comparatively few in the service are privileged to enjoy. Outside the military circles he had also many friends for his genial, unassuming manner gained for him goodwill wherever he went. This was made strikingly apparent by the large number of civilians, including representatives of the gentry in Kildare and the adjacent counties, who drove in carriages or motored early to the camp. They desired to join in the last tribute of respect to the memory of the deceased, but as the cortege was confined to the military they assembled in respectful groups at different points along the line of route to the cemetery. The extent to which the General's services were appreciated in the highest quarter may be inferred from the fact that His Royal Highness the Duke of Connaught sent Major Henniker to represent him. During his stay in Ireland as Commander of the Forces His Royal Highness was in close touch with General Morton, in whom he had the fullest confidence both as a soldier and a citizen. His Excellency the Lord Lieutenant shared in the general feeling of sorrow, but as his other engagements did not permit him to attend in person he sent Captain Ruthven, Military Secretary, to take his place. The Royal Irish Constabulary force was represented by its official head, Sir Neville Chamberlain, Inspector-General, and the officers of different ranks who followed the remains to the cemetery were more numerous than any similar body that has been seen in the Camp for many years past. Some of these had travelled long distances, bearing with them floral tributes, which affectionate hands placed on the coffin.

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About half-past two o'clock the special guard over the remains, consisting of a company of the Royal Warwickshire Regiment of which the deceased had been Adjutant, took up their position in the garden in front of his quarters at the South road. To the right of the column were eight pall-bearers, and close by were a number of sergeants of the Warwick Regiment, told off to carry the coffin to the gun carriage, which was drawn up at the rear of the pall-bearers, the other regiments were meanwhile marching to the positions assigned to them. It was the duty of several of these to line the thoroughfare on either side from the point at which the procession started on the South road to West church, where the first part of the Funeral Service was conducted. Each regiment bore its colours, draped in crape and uncased. Close on tree o'clock the coffin bearing the remains was carried from the General's quarters to the gun carriage. It was wrapped in a Union Jack, and was covered with floral wreaths, and bore the head dress and sword of the deceased. The measured tolling of the church bell and the heavy discharges of the minute gun announced that the procession had started for the church. It was headed by a cavalry band playing the Dead March, followed by four squadrons of cavalry, the 4th Battalion Royal Warwickshire Regiment, with its band, and the 1st Battalion East Lancashire Regiment, preceded by its band, all forming the escort. Then came the gun carriage with the remains, drawn by four horses, and followed by a trooper leading the saddled charger of the deceased, with boots reversed in the stirrups.

The chief mourners occupied the next place in the ranks. They were Colonel Morton (brother), Mr. W. G. Elliott (step-brother), Colonel Sturgess (brother-in-law), and Lieutenant Beaumont (nephew).

Next in the order came the representatives of the Lord Lieutenant and His Royal Highness the Duke of Connaught, friends (in uniform) outside the Seventh Division Command, the clergy, including the Presbyterian and Methodist chaplains and the Dean of Kildare; officers, in reversed order of seniority, and individual representatives of the corps and regiments other than officers. Then followed detachments of the rank and file by units in the following order: 3rd Dragoon Guards, 19th Hussars, Royal Horse Artillery, Royal Field Artillery, Royal Engineers, 4th Battalion Royal Warwickshire Regiment, 4th Battalion Royal Fusiliers, 1st Battalion East Lancashire Regiment, 1st Battalion South Staffordshire Regiment, detachments of the 13th Brigade Battalions in order of precedence, Army Service Corps, Royal

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Army Medical Corps, Ordnance, Pay, and Veterinary Corps, the whole forming a brilliant and picturesque spectacle such has been rarely seen even in this centre of military life. As the procession passed on its way to the church the soldiers lining the route presented arms, and on its arrival at the West Church, where a large number of civilians had assembled, the remains were received at the entrance by the Right Rev. Bishop Taylor Smith, Chaplain-General; Rev. W. G. Howard, Chaplain at Newbridge; Rev. A. Dallas-Ennis, Chaplain at the Curragh; and Rev. E.V. Hanson, Senior Chaplain to the Forces in Dublin. Lord Grenfell, Commander of the Forces in Ireland, had preceded the procession, and taken his place in the Church to the right of the lectern. He was accompanied by Lady Grenfell, and attended by his Aides-de-Camp. Seats were available for a limited number of the general public to the right and left of the two rows of pews in the centre, which were reserved for the chief mourners and officers. While the remains were being carried into the church and laid on a catafalque in front of the Communion rails the organist played Chopin's Dead March. The band of the Warwick Regiment occupied the pews beside the organ, and accompanied the choir in chanting the 39th Psalm. Bishop Taylor Smith read the 15th Chapter of the 1st Corinthians, and the choir sang the 499th Hymn, accompanied again by the band and organ. This portion of the service was most impressive and the scene presented by the diverse colours of the officers uniforms was singularly picturesque and beautiful.



In the meantime, the cavalry and infantry of the escort, leaving the general body of mourners, moved at quick time towards the cemetery, carrying their rifles "at the trial". They halted after passing Newbridge-Brownstown Road, and rested on arms reversed. There they remained until the coffin was replaced on the gun carriage, and the other troops reformed in procession in the order already named and marched up to them. The journey to the cemetery was then commenced in "slow time" and with reversed arms, the band of the South Staffordshire Regiment playing the Dead March. After passing Keane Barracks the pace was changed to the "quick time", the rifles being carried reversed, and three hundred yards from the cemetery the band of the East Lancashire Regiment took up the Dead March from the South Staffords, and the pace was again reduced to "slow time".

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At the cemetery gate the coffin was carried by the eight sergeants selected for the purpose to the side of the grave, the cavalry forming up facing south-east, the Warwickshire forming in line outside the north wall and facing south, the East Lancashire being on the south east, and the 1st South Staffordshire on the south-west. The special guard, with band and drums, formed up on the lawn. The remaining portion of the Burial Service was conducted by Bishop Taylor Smith, and the other Chaplains assisting him, and the coffin was lowered into the grave, which was immediately closed up. A farewell salute of thirteen guns was fired, a bugler sounded the "last post", and the impressive ceremony came to an end. The troops, who were all dressed in review order, then returned to their respective quarters. The coffin, which was of polished oak, with heavy brass mounted handles was supplied by Mr. Waller. A shield on the lid bore the following inscription:

**Lieutenant-General Sir Gerald Morton, K.C.I.E., C.V.O., C.B.
Born February, 1845; died April, 1906.**



Curragh Military Cemetery