



The Royal Munster Fusiliers

The **Royal Munster Fusiliers** was a regular infantry regiment of the British Army. One of eight Irish regiments raised largely in Ireland, it had its home depot in Tralee. It was originally formed in 1881 by the amalgamation of two regiments of the former East India Company. New states were disbanded. The regiment won three Victoria Crosses in the Great War.

History

Its historic background goes back as far as 1652 before it was reformed as part of a reorganisation of the army in 1881.

20th century

Prior to the First World War the regiment consisted of two regular service and two reserve battalions. In August 1914 the need for further divisions resulted in the creation of a New Army. Subsequently the Royal Munster Fusiliers had a total of 11 raised battalions. The regiment was awarded 51 battle honours and three Victoria Crosses. It suffered a total of 3,070 lost casualties.

Gallipoli

The Munsters lost 70% of their men and many of their longest serving veterans.

The 1RMF were in the front lines again on 23 April at the Somme sector, slowly building up strength to 26 officers and 476 men.

Kaiserschlacht

On 21 March 1918 the German Army launched its largest offensive of the war, the devastating Spring Offensive or Kaiserschlacht, with 65 divisions along 54 miles of the British front. The 1RMF was fortunate to be in reserve as the Germans opened with a gas-bombardment.

The battalion remained under shellfire even behind the lines and was reduced to 7 officers and 261 men by 3 October.

Somme 1916

The battalion was transferred with its Division down to the Somme in July for the opening of the Battle of the Somme, entering the lines on 14 July capturing its objectives two days later, and repulsing the German counterattack on 18 July, in all with an officer and 26 men killed, 127 wounded and 50 gassed

Passchendaele

By 6 November 1917 the 2RMF now numbered 20 officers and 630 other ranks when it arrived at Irish Farm in the Ypres salient. The ground was a quagmire full of water-logged shell-holes after four months of battle. It was to be the last British effort of the Passchendaele campaign. Three hours later saw only 7 officers and 240 other ranks present; 12 and 393 having become casualties. The battalion was railed out to Briulles for reforming for the rest of the year.