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0521629896 - A Military History of Ireland  
Edited by Thomas Bartlett and Keith Jeffery  
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## *A military history of Ireland*

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This is a major, collaborative study of organised military activity and its broad impact on Ireland over the last thousand years or so, from the middle of the first millennium AD to modern time. It integrates the best recent scholarship in military history into its social and political context to provide a comprehensive treatment of the Irish military experience.

The eighteen chronologically organised chapters are written by leading scholars each of whom is an authority on the period in question. Drawing the whole work together is a wide-ranging introductory essay on the 'Irish military tradition' which explores the relationship of Irish society and politics with militarism and military affairs. The text is illustrated throughout by over 120 pictures and maps.

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*A military history of*  
**IRELAND**

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*Edited by*

**Thomas Bartlett**

*University College, Dublin*

*and*

**Keith Jeffery**

*University of Ulster at Jordanstown*

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*Dedicated to*

Thomas Bartlett (1868–1918),  
*Royal Garrison Artillery (1914–18)*

Thomas Bartlett (1901–56),  
*Belfast IRA (1918–21) and Óglaigh na hÉireann (1922–4)*

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## Contents

|  |             |
|--|-------------|
|  | <i>page</i> |
| <i>List of illustrations</i>   | ix          |
| <i>List of maps</i>  | xviii       |
| <i>List of tables</i>  | xix         |
| <i>List of contributors</i>  | xx          |
| <i>Preface</i>   | xxi         |
| <i>Acknowledgements</i>  | xxiii       |
| <i>Abbreviations used in notes</i>   | xxiv        |
| <hr/>  |             |
| 1 An Irish military tradition?<br>Thomas Bartlett and Keith Jeffery                            | 1           |
| 2 Irish warfare before 1100<br>T. M. Charles-Edwards   | 26          |
| 3 Irish and Anglo-Norman warfare in twelfth-century<br>Ireland<br>Marie Therese Flanagan       | 52          |
| 4 The defence of the English lordship, 1250–1450<br>Robin Frame                                | 76          |
| 5 Gaelic warfare in the Middle Ages<br>Katharine Simms   | 99          |
| 6 The Tudors and the origins of the modern Irish states:<br>a standing army<br>Steven G. Ellis | 116         |
| 7 The captains' games: army and society in Elizabethan<br>Ireland<br>Ciaran Brady              | 136         |

*Contents*

|    |   |     |
|----|---|-----|
| 8  | The wars of religion, 1603–1660<br>Jane H. Ohlmeyer                                 | 160 |
| 9  | The Williamite war, 1689–1691<br>John Childs  | 188 |
| 10 | The Irish military establishment, 1660–1776<br>Alan J. Guy                          | 211 |
| 11 | The defence of Protestant Ireland, 1660–1760<br>S. J. Connolly                      | 231 |
| 12 | Defence, counter-insurgency and rebellion: Ireland,<br>1793–1803<br>Thomas Bartlett | 247 |
| 13 | Irish soldiers abroad, 1600–1800<br>Harman Murtagh                                  | 294 |
| 14 | Non-professional soldiery, c. 1600–1800<br>David W. Miller                          | 315 |
| 15 | Army organisation and society in the nineteenth<br>century<br>E. M. Spiers          | 335 |
| 16 | The army and law and order in the nineteenth century<br>Virginia Crossman           | 358 |
| 17 | Militarism in Ireland, 1900–1922<br>David Fitzpatrick                               | 379 |
| 18 | The army in independent Ireland<br>Eunan O’Halpin                                   | 407 |
| 19 | The British army and Ireland since 1922<br>Keith Jeffery                            | 431 |
|    | <i>Notes</i>  | 459 |
|    | <i>Bibliography</i>   | 507 |
|    | <i>Index</i>  | 534 |

## *Illustrations*

|     |  |        |
|-----|--|--------|
|     | —————  |        |
| 1.1 | The death of Cuchulainn, illustration by Patrick Tuohy<br>(Standish O’Grady, <i>History of Ireland</i> , 1880) | page 3 |
| 1.2 | Loyalist mural in east Belfast, 1993<br>(Sally Visick Landscape)   | 5      |
| 1.3 | Countess Markievicz in uniform, c. 1915<br>(National Museum of Ireland)  | 9      |
| 1.4 | Casement’s ‘Irish Brigade’ of prisoners-of-war, c. 1915<br>(National Museum of Ireland)                        | 14     |
| 1.5 | Great War recruiting poster<br>(National Library of Ireland)   | 19     |
| 1.6 | Sinn Féin anti-recruiting cartoon<br>(National Museum of Ireland)  | 21     |
| 1.7 | Irish battalion of St Patrick, papal army, 1860<br>(National Library of Ireland)                               | 23     |
| 1.8 | ‘Who fears to speak of Easter Week?’ (1916 poster)<br>(National Library of Ireland)                            | 24     |
| 2.1 | Irish spearman from the <i>Book of Kells</i><br>(The Board of Trinity College, Dublin)                         | 29     |
| 2.2 | Crannóg at Lough Owel, Westmeath<br>(Office of Public Works, Ireland)  | 31     |
| 2.3 | Grianan of Aileach<br>(Office of Public Works, Ireland)  | 37     |
| 2.4 | Cross of Muiredach, Monasterboice: Vikings seizing Christ<br>(Office of Public Works, Ireland)                 | 45     |
|     | —————  |        |

*List of illustrations*

|     |   |     |
|-----|---|-----|
| 3.1 | Nineteenth-century depiction of the battle of Clontarf, 1014<br>(National Library of Ireland)                               | 56  |
| 3.2 | Twelfth-century stirrup<br>(National Museum of Ireland)   | 65  |
| 3.3 | Lough Derg sword<br>(National Museum of Ireland)  | 71  |
| 3.4 | Irish axemen fighting<br>(British Library, Royal MS 13 B VIII, f. 28)   | 72  |
| 3.5 | Tympanum of north door, King Cormac's Chapel, Rock of Cashel<br>(Office of Public Works, Ireland)                           | 73  |
| 3.6 | Trim Castle, County Meath<br>(Office of Public Works, Ireland)  | 74  |
| 4.1 | Knight at Kilfane, County Kilkenny<br>(Office of Public Works, Ireland)   | 83  |
| 4.2 | Roscommon Castle<br>(Private collection)  | 84  |
| 4.3 | Dalkey Tower House<br>(Private collection)  | 89  |
| 4.4 | Effigy of knight at 'Hospital Church', Barrysfarm, County Limerick<br>(Office of Public Works, Ireland)                     | 95  |
| 5.1 | Gaelic soldiers<br>(Derricke's <i>Image of Ireland</i> , 1581)  | 103 |
| 5.2 | Harry Avery's Castle, County Tyrone<br>(Department of the Environment for Northern Ireland. © Crown copyright.)             | 109 |
| 5.3 | Three gallowglasses on the O'Connor tomb, Roscommon Abbey<br>(Office of Public Works, Ireland)                              | 111 |
| 5.4 | Effigy of O'Cahan at St Mary's Abbey, Dungiven (late fifteenth century)<br>(Hunt, <i>Irish Medieval Figure Sculpture</i> )  | 113 |
| 5.5 | Effigy of Malachy MacOwney O'More (1502), Abbey Leix House, County Laois<br>(Hunt, <i>Irish Medieval Figure Sculpture</i> ) | 113 |



*List of illustrations*

|     |   |     |
|-----|---|-----|
| 5.6 | Two gallowglasses on the O'Connor tomb,<br>Roscommon Abbey<br>( <i>Hunt, Irish Medieval Figure Sculpture</i> )            | 114 |
| 6.1 | Successful return of English force after the defeat<br>of the Irish kerne<br>( <i>Derricke's Image of Ireland, 1581</i> ) | 119 |
| 6.2 | Dublin Castle under siege<br>( <i>Holinshed's Irish Chronicle, 1577</i> )   | 123 |
| 6.3 | Maynooth Castle<br>(Office of Public Works, Ireland)  | 131 |
| 6.4 | Execution of rebels by Lord Deputy Sidney<br>( <i>Holinshed's Irish Chronicle, 1577</i> )                                 | 133 |
| 7.1 | Departure of Sir Henry Sidney from Dublin Castle<br>( <i>Derricke's Image of Ireland, 1581</i> )                          | 139 |
| 7.2 | Sir Henry Sidney in the field delivering a message<br>( <i>Derricke's Image of Ireland, 1581</i> )                        | 141 |
| 7.3 | Sir Henry Sidney's army on the march<br>( <i>Derricke's Image of Ireland, 1581</i> )                                      | 143 |
| 7.4 | Sir Henry Sidney's army in battle with an Irish force<br>( <i>Derricke's Image of Ireland, 1581</i> )                     | 145 |
| 7.5 | The submission of Turlogh O'Neill to Sir Henry<br>Sidney<br>( <i>Derricke's Image of Ireland, 1581</i> )                  | 147 |
| 7.6 | The taking of Enniskillen, 4 February 1594, by<br>John Thomas<br>(National Gallery of Ireland)                            | 154 |
| 8.1 | Portumna Castle, County Galway<br>(Office of Public Works, Ireland)   | 162 |
| 8.2 | Randal MacDonnell, second earl and first marquis<br>of Antrim (1609–1683)<br>(By permission of Viscount Dunluce)          | 169 |
| 8.3 | The poor English-Irish soldier<br>(From a broad-side ballad of 1642)  | 179 |
| 8.4 | The fortifications of Dublin<br>(Detail from the Down Survey, 1655–1656)  | 183 |

*List of illustrations*

|      |   |     |
|------|---|-----|
| 9.1  | William III, by Jan Wyck<br>(Ulster Museum)   | 191 |
| 9.2  | Map of the City of Londonderry, 1689, by Captain<br>Francis Nevill (1694)<br>(Cumberland Map Collection, Windsor Castle,<br>Royal Library. © 1991. Her Majesty the Queen)                   | 194 |
| 9.3  | French manuscript map of Schomberg's encampment<br>at Dundalk, 7 September to November 1689<br>(Cumberland Map Collection, Windsor Castle,<br>Royal Library. © 1991. Her Majesty the Queen) | 195 |
| 9.4  | The victory of King William III at the battle of the<br>Boyne, 1 July 1690, by Dirck Maas<br>(National Gallery of Ireland)  | 202 |
| 9.5  | Prospect of Limerick, 1685, by the military engineer,<br>Thomas Phillips<br>(National Library of Ireland)   | 204 |
| 9.6  | A plan of the battle of Aughrim, 12 July 1691.<br>A manuscript map by William Eyres<br>(Cumberland Map Collection, Windsor Castle,<br>Royal Library. © 1991. Her Majesty the Queen)         | 208 |
| 10.1 | Royal Hospital, Kilmainham<br>(Office of Public Works, Ireland)   | 215 |
| 10.2 | Richard Talbot, earl of Tyrconnell, 1690<br>(National Portrait Gallery)   | 217 |
| 10.3 | The Battle of the Boyne, and flight of King James II<br>from Ireland, 1690<br>(National Gallery of Ireland)   | 218 |
| 10.4 | George, fourth Viscount Townshend<br>(National Army Museum)   | 221 |
| 10.5 | Carrickfergus Castle<br>(Bruijel Design/Sally Visick Landscape)   | 227 |
| 11.1 | Principal Towns, Forts and Harbours in Ireland,<br>by Richard William Seale<br>(National Gallery of Ireland)  | 233 |
| 11.2 | James II and the Earl d'Avaux defeated by the<br>Protestants at Enniskillen<br>(National Gallery of Ireland)  | 237 |

*List of illustrations*

|      |  |     |
|------|--|-----|
| 11.3 | Military parade on Leinster House Lawn, by John James Barralet/Thomas Milton<br>(National Gallery of Ireland)                          | 243 |
| 11.4 | The Rt. Hon. Thomas Connolly in Volunteer uniform<br>(National Gallery of Ireland)   | 245 |
| 12.1 | Operations in County Kildare, 1798<br>(National Library of Ireland)  | 275 |
| 12.2 | The seizing of Lord Edward Fitzgerald<br>(from Sir Richard Musgrave, <i>Memoirs of Irish Rebellion</i> , 1801)                         | 277 |
| 12.3 | Battle of Arklow, 9 June 1798<br>(National Library of Ireland)   | 280 |
| 12.4 | 'Antient Brittons' (Welsh Fencibles) cut to pieces near Carnew by the Insurgents, 1798 (Sadler, 1868)<br>(National Library of Ireland) | 283 |
| 12.5 | Queen's Own Royal Dublin Militia going into action at Vinegar Hill (Sadler, 1879)<br>(National Library of Ireland)                     | 284 |
| 12.6 | Vinegar Hill: charge of the 5th Dragoon Guards (Sadler, 1879)<br>(National Library of Ireland)   | 285 |
| 12.7 | 'Hunted Down - '98' (J. F. O'Hea, 1885)<br>(National Library of Ireland)   | 289 |
| 12.8 | 1798 Centenary Certificate, showing the escape of Michael Dwyer<br>(National Library of Ireland)                                       | 290 |
| 12.9 | 'A scout of '98'<br>( <i>Weekly Freeman</i> , 19 December 1891)  | 291 |
| 13.1 | Irish kerne or mercenaries, 1521, by Albrecht Dürer (Staatliche Museen zu Berlin - Preussischer Kulturbesitz Kupferstichkabinett)      | 297 |
| 13.2 | 'Remember Fontenoy!'<br>( <i>Weekly Nation</i> , Christmas 1989)   | 299 |
| 13.3 | Count Maximillian Ulysses Browne<br>(National Gallery of Ireland)  | 302 |
| 13.4 | Field-Marshal Francis Maurice Lacy<br>(National Gallery of Ireland)  | 303 |

*List of illustrations*

|      |  |     |
|------|--|-----|
| 13.5 | Representation of Irish soldier fighting abroad<br>(National Gallery of Ireland)   | 309 |
| 14.1 | Aerial view of the siege of Londonderry, 1689<br>(National Gallery of Ireland)   | 321 |
| 14.2 | Kerry Legion Volunteer badge<br>(With the kind permission of the Trustees of<br>the Ulster Museum)   | 325 |
| 14.3 | The Dublin Volunteers on College Green, 1784<br>(National Gallery of Ireland)  | 329 |
| 14.4 | Earl of Charlemont at Volunteer review in<br>Phoenix Park, 3 June 1782<br>(National Gallery of Ireland)                                    | 330 |
| 14.5 | Ulster Volunteer Force in North Down on<br>parade, 1914<br>(Ulster Museum)   | 331 |
| 14.6 | Mr Redmond inspecting Irish Volunteers,<br>August 1914<br>( <i>Irish Life</i> , 21 August 1914)  | 333 |
| 15.1 | A group of the 27th Foot (Inniskillings) during<br>the battle of Waterloo (18 June 1815)<br>(National Army Museum)                         | 336 |
| 15.2 | <i>Listed for the Connaught Rangers</i> , by Lady Butler<br>(Bury Museum and Art Gallery)  | 338 |
| 15.3 | Major-General Frederick S. Roberts<br>(National Army Museum)   | 343 |
| 15.4 | 5th Dragoon Guards and 2nd Battalion<br>Connaught Rangers returning from the<br>garrison church, Nasiribad, 1898<br>(National Army Museum) | 347 |
| 15.5 | Camp of the 18th (Royal Irish) Regiment at<br>Sebastopol, May 1856<br>(National Army Museum)   | 350 |
| 15.6 | Bernardo O'Higgins (1778–1842)<br>(National Library of Ireland)  | 356 |
| 16.1 | Sub-sheriff Whistler, with military assistance,<br>attempting to enforce a rent demand, sketch by Sadler.<br>(National Gallery of Ireland) | 361 |

*List of illustrations*

|       |   |       |
|-------|---|-------|
| 16.2  | Military Map of Ireland in 1822, showing deployment of troops to counter agrarian disorder (National Library of Ireland)  | 362–3 |
| 16.3  | Pursuit of the Fenians in Tipperary ( <i>Illustrated London News</i> , 30 March 1867)   | 364   |
| 16.4  | Troops camped at the workhouse at Kells ( <i>Illustrated London News</i> , 9 April 1870)  | 369   |
| 16.5  | Lancers clearing the street at Granard at the Longford election ( <i>Illustrated London News</i> , 28 May 1870)   | 371   |
| 16.6  | Victoria Barracks, Belfast (National Library of Ireland)  | 374   |
| 16.7  | <i>Military Manoeuvres</i> (1891), by Richard T. Moynan (National Gallery of Ireland)   | 377   |
| 17.1  | North Down 1st battalion Ulster Volunteer Force (Ulster Museum)   | 385   |
| 17.2. | Sketches by Jim Maultsaid from the Ulster Division training Camp at Finner, County Donegal, September 1914 (Royal Ulster Rifles Regimental Museum)                                      | 387   |
| 17.3  | Cavalry on recruiting drive in a midland town, c. 1915  | 391   |
| 17.4  | Prisoners from Enniscorthy arriving in Kilmainham, May 1916 (National Library of Ireland)   | 395   |
| 17.5  | Recruiting posters near Strabane, County Tyrone, in 1919 (Cooper Collection, D.1422/B/9/9. By permission of the Deputy Keeper of the Records, Public Record Office of Northern Ireland) | 398   |
| 17.6  | 'The Men of the West, 1916 to '21' (National Library of Ireland)  | 401   |
| 17.7  | Bombed bridge near Bandon, c. 1921, before the Truce (Percival papers 4/3. By courtesy of the Trustees of the Imperial War Museum)  | 403   |

*List of illustrations*

|      |  |     |
|------|--|-----|
| 17.8 | Reprisal at Ennistymon, County Clare, September 1920<br>(Private collection)   | 404 |
| 17.9 | Auxiliaries on patrol, 1921<br>(National Library of Ireland)   | 405 |
| 18.1 | Michael Collins (c. 1922)<br>(Military Archives, Dublin)   | 409 |
| 18.2 | 'Uniforms through the ages' display during Military Tattoo at the Royal Dublin Society grounds, 1935<br>(Military Archives, Dublin)  | 412 |
| 18.3 | Troops of 2 Battalion, wearing the distinctive 'Vickers' helmet, c. 1935<br>(Military Archives, Dublin)  | 417 |
| 18.4 | Eamon De Valera, accompanied by Oscar Traynor (Minister for Defence), inspecting a Local Defence Force 'mock up' gun position in Howth, County Dublin<br>(Military Archives, Dublin) | 419 |
| 18.5 | German Heinkel HE 111H, photographed at Bonmahon, County Waterford, 1 April 1941<br>(Military Archives, Dublin)  | 423 |
| 18.6 | Soldier on checkpoint duty in Irish area of operations, South Lebanon, 1990<br>(Military Archives, Dublin)   | 425 |
| 18.7 | Army–Garda co-operation near the border in the 1990s<br>(Public Relations Section, Defence Forces Headquarters)  | 429 |
| 19.1 | Ulster Special Constabulary platoon at the Rectory, Garrison, County Fermanagh, c. 1921<br>(Ulster Museum)   | 435 |
| 19.2 | Northern Ireland vehicle maintenance class (18 March 1942)<br>(By courtesy of the Trustees of the Imperial War Museum)   | 439 |

*List of illustrations*

|       |  |     |
|-------|--|-----|
| 19.3  | Armoured cars near Giant's Causeway, County Antrim, 28 January 1941<br>(Imperial War Museum)   | 441 |
| 19.4. | US troops arriving at Derry, 13 May 1942<br>(Imperial War Museum)  | 443 |
| 19.5  | Victoria Barracks, Belfast, after the air raid of 15–16 April 1941<br>(Imperial War Museum)  | 445 |
| 19.6  | Troops facing rioters in Derry, April 1971<br>(Belfast Telegraph)  | 453 |
| 19.7  | Soldier on patrol in west Belfast in the 1990s<br>(Army Information Service)   | 455 |
| 19.8  | Recruiting advertisement for Irish regiments,<br><i>Belfast News-Letter</i> , 22 March 1955<br>(Ministry of Defence/Central Office of Information) | 457 |

## *Maps*

---

|      |  |                |
|------|--|----------------|
| 2.1  | Ireland c. 750   | <i>page</i> 35 |
| 4.1  | Expeditions by paid armies in Ireland, 1295–1360               | 78             |
| 4.2  | Royal services 1252–1315                                       | 79             |
| 4.3  | Royal services 1324–1442                                       | 81             |
| 4.4  | The campaigns of Ralph Ufford, 1345                            | 93             |
| 8.1  | Ireland on the eve of the cessation of arms,<br>September 1643 | 165            |
| 12.1 | The French invasion of Connacht, 1798                          | 252            |
| 12.2 | The Battle of Vinegar Hill, 1798                               | 256            |



## *Tables*

---

|      |   |                |
|------|---|----------------|
| 4.1  | Forces serving in Leinster, 27 September–<br>15 October 1353                  | <i>page 85</i> |
| 8.1  | Estimates of Protestant troop strength,<br>1642–1649                          | 170            |
| 8.2  | Estimates of Catholic troop strength,<br>1642–1649                            | 171            |
| 12.1 | The armed forces of the crown in Ireland,<br>1 January 1793 to 1 January 1800 | 249            |
| 15.1 | The Irish proportion of the British army in<br>the nineteenth century         | 337            |

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## *Preface*

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This volume, which deals with organised military activity and its broad impact on Ireland over the last millennium or so, reflects with an Irish dimension the enormous growth in serious military history which has occurred in the last three decades. In the past, many academic historians tended to dismiss 'military history' as no more than the limited, frequently antiquarian and rather technical study of battles and combat generally. Confined within a circle of martial enthusiasts the military historian could afford to ignore wider historiographical developments. Academics, for their part herbivorous creatures with delicate scholarly sensibilities, were content to keep their distance from the rough-and-tumble carnivores who dealt in the blood and thunder of the battlefield. Thus two branches of historical endeavour advanced, mutually uncomprehending, if not mutually antagonistic. In fact, this is a caricature. The wonderful range of work published since its establishment in 1949 in the *Irish Sword*, the 'house journal' of the Military History Society of Ireland, testifies to the richness rather than the narrowness of Irish military history. But this work has never properly been integrated into the academic historical mainstream, and an emphasis on combat has perhaps led to the neglect, for example, of the social history of the military in Ireland. This collection of essays seeks to redress that balance and attempts to draw together in a single volume the best fruits of military history within the broad social and political context of Ireland as it has developed to the present day. Taking up the metaphor used above, we contend that the historian must be an omnivore, and will neglect the bloodier aspects of our history at his or her peril.

One theme which we have addressed from the start is that of the alleged Irish 'military tradition'. Given the conventional wisdom that the Irish, north and south, were (and are) a martial, not to say warlike nation, it is surprising that to date very little attention has been paid to this area of study. In drawing up our agenda we have urged the contributors – each of whom is an authority on the period in question – to consider the interaction of the military with society in general. We have for the most part limited our study to military affairs within the island of Ireland itself and have not attempted to follow exhaustively the exploits of Irish

*Preface*

soldiers throughout the world. The exceptions to this limitation, which occur in one complete chapter and parts of others, have been made on the grounds that an examination of the service of the Irish abroad can help us test the validity (or otherwise) of an Irish military tradition. Overseas service, too, has clearly influenced social and political attitudes back home.

It may be that this volume, with its emphasis on the social aspects of soldiering and warfare, will be characterised as part of the so-called 'new military history'. At its most extreme this becomes the manifestly absurd production of military history with the war left out. In our view this would be neither magnificent nor history. On the other hand, while we have aimed to include some account of the chief battles of Ireland's history, we have not dwelt on them, nor have we required our contributors to provide 'blow-by-blow' accounts of Irish military engagements. Such narratives are already widely available, for example in the admirable work of G. A. Hayes-McCoy and A. E. C. Bredin. We have sought to build on this work and begin to fill in the wider social and political background to the armed life-and-death struggles of Irishmen through the centuries.

We have deliberately chosen to call this volume *a* military history rather than *the* military history of Ireland since we are acutely aware of how much work has recently been done in this field, and how much more academic research is currently being pursued. In a way, like all historians, our findings and conclusions can only be interim and provisional, and it ill behoves us to be too definitive or dogmatic. Working in the two polities of modern Ireland, though both having roots in the north of the island, it may additionally be taken that we are well aware of the corrosive impact which war, violence and militarism has had, and continues to have, on Ireland. But unless we strive to understand these forces and to examine their effects on society in general, and over our whole history, we will never even be able to counteract their malignant power and fearsome attraction. Our hope is that this work may contribute something towards such understanding, and, as we write just a few weeks after cease-fires have been declared by both republican and loyalist paramilitary groups, we hope that the apparent timeliness of our volume's completion may not be undermined by any resumption of organised military action on the island of Ireland.

The editors dedicate this work to their own forebears who in the twentieth century served as soldiers for Ireland and Britain.

Thomas Bartlett and Keith Jeffery  
*Galway and Belfast*  
*Armistice Day 1994*

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## Abbreviations

Citations of both published and unpublished secondary sources in the notes consist of author's surname(s) and short titles, with full information being provided in the bibliography. Citations for primary sources are generally given in full in the notes, apart from some abbreviated references to well-known printed editions of documents.

|                                      |  |
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| Add. MSS                             | Additional Manuscript  |
| AFM                                  | <i>Annala Rioghachta Eireann</i>   |
| ALC                                  | <i>Annals of Loch Cé</i>   |
| <i>Ann. Inisf.</i>                   | <i>Annals of Inisfallen</i>  |
| <i>Ann. Tig.</i>                     | <i>Annals of Tigernach</i>   |
| AU                                   | <i>Annals of Ulster</i>  |
| <i>Bk Rights</i>                     | <i>Lebor na Cert</i>   |
| BL                                   | British Library  |
| Bodl.                                | Bodleian Library, Oxford   |
| <i>Cal. S.P. Dom.</i>                | <i>Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series</i>   |
| <i>Cal. S.P. Ire.</i>                | <i>Calendar of the State Papers relating to Ireland, 1509–1670</i> (20 vols., London, 1860–1912)                 |
| <i>Cal. S.P. Spain</i>               | <i>Calendar of . . . State Papers relating to . . . Spain</i>  |
| CCC                                  | Caithréim Cellacháin Chaisil   |
| CGG                                  | Cogad Gáedel re Gallaib  |
| <i>Cog. Gaedhel</i>                  | <i>Cogadh Gaedhel re Gallaibh</i>  |
| <i>Commons' Jn.</i>                  | <i>Journals of the House of Commons</i>  |
| CS                                   | <i>Chronicum Scotorum</i>  |
| <i>Fiants Ire., Hen. VIII</i> (etc.) | 'Calendar to fiants of the reign of Henry VIII . . . ' (etc.)  |
| <i>Franciscan MSS</i>                | HMC, <i>Report on the Franciscan Manuscripts preserved at the Convent, Merchants Quay, Dublin</i> (Dublin, 1906) |
| <i>Gir. Camb. op.</i>                | <i>Giraldi Cambrensis opera</i>  |
| HC                                   | House of Commons (Papers)  |

*List of abbreviations*

|                                |  |
|--------------------------------|--|
| HMC                            | Historical Manuscripts Commission (Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts)                         |
| IWM                            | Imperial War Museum (London)   |
| <i>L. &amp; P. Hen. VIII</i>   | Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, Henry VIII (21 vols., London, 1862–1932)                     |
| MA                             | Military Archives (Dublin)   |
| NAI                            | National Archives of Ireland   |
| NAM                            | National Army Museum (London)  |
| NLI                            | National Library of Ireland  |
| <i>New Hist. Ire.</i>          | <i>New History of Ireland</i>  |
| <i>OED</i>                     | <i>Oxford English Dictionary</i>   |
| <i>Ormonde MSS</i>             | HMC, <i>Report on the Manuscripts of the Duke of Ormonde</i> , new series (8 vols., London, 1902–1920) |
| PRO                            | Public Record Office (Kew)   |
| PRONI                          | Public Record Office of Northern Ireland   |
| RA                             | Royal Archives (Windsor Castle)  |
| RIC                            | Royal Irish Constabulary   |
| <i>Rot. Pat. Hib.</i>          | <i>Rotulorum Patentium et Clausorum Cancellariae Hiberniae</i>   |
| s.a.                           | sub anno   |
| <i>S.P. Hen. VIII</i>          | <i>State Papers, Henry VIII</i>  |
| <i>Stat. Ire., John–Hen. V</i> | <i>Statutes and Ordinances . . . King John to Henry V</i>  |
| TCD                            | Trinity College, Dublin  |
| UCDA                           | University College Dublin Department of Archives   |
| USNA                           | United States National Archives  |