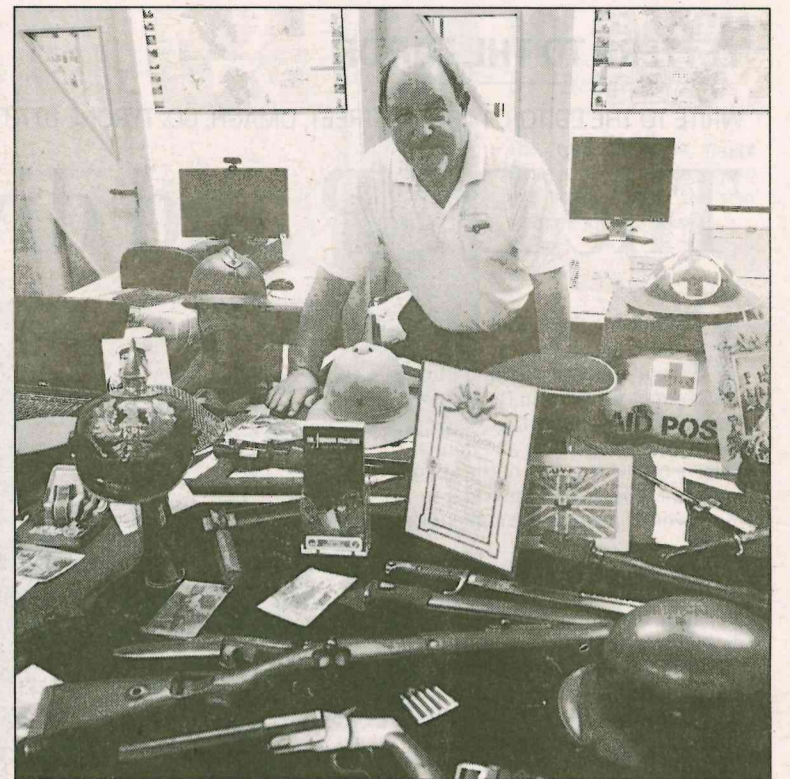




WWI pictures form part of the memorabilia on display at the Ulster American Folk Park.

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Philip Faithfull with his collection of WWI memorabilia.

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# Exhibition reveals story of West Tyrone's 'UVF nurses' during WWI

BY RONAN McSHERRY

ORGANISERS of the 'Living Legacies 1914-18' exhibition were overwhelmed when dozens of visitors brought along a multitude of photographs, stories and memorabilia handed down from World War 1.

Among the items on display at the Ulster American Folk Park last week were an assortment of guns and rifles, bullets, grenades, knives, swords and helmets from both sides involved in 'The Great War.'

There were also recruiting posters and 'postcards' made specially for soldiers to send home from the front. A postcard depicting the war trenches, titled 'My heart is with you tonight,' bore the message, "My heart is with you tonight no matter where you be. All the time I think of you, in fancy I live all those bygone days. My heart is with you tonight my love, my heart is with you always."

**"The majority of British Army troops that came from Ireland were Catholics when you consider the whole island. Even in Ulster there was a sizeable representation of Catholics."**

Ten million people lost their lives in the war that affected the entire globe and was fought mostly in Europe.

Guest speakers at the workshop, called 'World War 1 and You,' spoke about the war objects and recalled the sacrifice made by local people.

Dr Johanne Devlin Trew from the University of Jordanstown was delighted with the response and said the items will be 'digitised' so that their history will be preserved for years to come.

She explained, "This is one of a series of workshops that the project 'Living Legacies 1914-18' is running. We the material people brought in exceeded our expectations. We are digi-

tising these things and keeping a copy. We are also giving people back their objects and giving them a digitised copy so that they can easily give copies to their children and grandchildren so that the legacy of this war will be carried on. Very importantly there are the stories with the meaning behind the objects."

The WW1 academic said many stories are emanating from Tyrone and myths are being challenged such as the belief that most of the soldiers

came from a Protestant background.

"We know that is absolutely not the case," she said. "The majority of British Army troops that came from Ireland were Catholics when you consider the whole island. Even in Ulster there was a sizeable representation of Catholics."

Among the fascinating stories is that of a group of 'UVF nurses' from West Tyrone who when turned down by the British Army went to France and set up the 'Tyrone Hospital' to

help the war effort.

Dr Devlin Trew explained, "The Duchess of Abercorn was the patron of the UVF (Ulster Volunteer Force) nursing brigade which had girls from the Omagh area and other places such as Fintona and Newtownstewart. They offered their services but the British Army didn't think they were well enough qualified. So the UVF nurses offered themselves to the French Army who gladly accepted their help. They went over to France, formed a

battlefield hospital and it was called the 'Tyrone Hospital.' This and other stories were completely unknown to me.

Claire McElhinney, whose grandmother was one of these nurses, brought along documents including her grandmother's ID card as a UVF nurse and a photograph of the 'Tyrone Hospital.'

"There are a lot of WWI stories from the Tyrone area and an event like this helps generate information."

## Nephew recalls tragedy of uncle who fought in the Indian Army

A REGIMENTAL sword, documents and photographs brought along by Sam Bullock from Strabane were among an array of fascinating artefacts on display at the WW1 exhibition at the Ulster American Folk Park.

Sam's uncle Herbert fought for the Allied forces against the Turks, who were on the side of the Germans. He was awarded the OBE (Order of the British Empire) and died at the age of 23 shortly after the war from a disease contracted while he was serving in Russia.

Among the items Sam produced was a memorial notice in a newspaper to the 'Late Captain H Bullock.'

A section of the poignant tribute to the young soldier read, "Herbert Bullock was predestined to a soldier's life. His fine physique and military bearing, his keen intellect and ready courage, all combined to



Sam Bullock with a WW1 sword owned by his uncle, Lieut HPS Bullock, who fought with the 8th Punjab Regiment.

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make him a successful leader of men, and to inspire them to noble deeds.

"When the call to war came from King and country Herbert was amongst the first to respond, and although he was little more than a boy, yet in his breast

there beat the heart of a big man."

Sam said his father never spoke of his brother Herbert who died at such a young age. "Maybe it was too painful for him," he remarked.

"I brought along the sword that belonged to

my uncle who was in the Indian Army. He was in the 1st 89th Punjabis and fought in Iraq against the Turks. Much of the conflict was actually in the same place as the last Iraq war with the Americans right up the Tigris Valley. Eventually he was in Russia and

died shortly after he got a disease there. He died at home after the war aged just 23."

The narrative on the short life of Captain Herbert Bullock relates his bravery on the battlefield.

Tragically after the acts of bravery, the manuscript reads, "He was about four months in Russia when he became ill. He came home convalescent, and it was thought in a few weeks his perfect health would return; but alas! It was not to be so."

Herbert Bullock's memory however has been preserved by his nephew Sam and now by the 'Living Legacies 1914-18' project.

Sam added, "My two brothers are long dead and I am the only one left that knows much about him. It was great to take items to the exhibition and it was amazing that practically everyone there has their own story to tell."