

Lieutenant Colonel Richard Alexander Rooth 1866 – 1915

Lieutenant Colonel Richard Alexander Rooth, commanding the 1st Royal Dublin Fusiliers, is one of the few Dawlish soldiers of the Great War about whom the manner of their death can be described with certainty. He led his regiment ashore and was killed on 'V' beach at Gallipoli, watched by those on supporting ships who were unable to help. He was not a 'son of Dawlish', nor is his name on the town War Memorial, but he is remembered in a plaque on the north wall of St Gregory's, the parish church, placed by his Dawlish wife and family.

Richard Alexander Rooth was born to John Wilcoxon Rooth (1835-1874) and Elizabeth Creedy Rooth (1825-1917) at 44 Camden Square, Kentish Town, London on 22 March 1866. His father was a barrister with chambers at Lincoln's Inn. His mother was formerly E C Smith, born in Bristol. Richard went to Highgate Grammar School (where there is another memorial to him) before passing into the Royal Military College, Sandhurst. He was gazetted Lieutenant in August 1885 and went to Egypt to join the 2nd Battalion, Royal Dublin Fusiliers.

In January 1886 he moved with the regiment to Poona, India, until 1890, when he was returned to Ireland to the regimental depot in Naas. He rejoined the regiment in 1892 and on 29th December 1893 he was gazetted Adjutant of his Battalion, and on 18 July 1894 he was promoted Captain.

Richard Rooth married Amy Mary Cann (1867-1950) on 25th June 1895 at the Parish Church, Dawlish. She was the only daughter of Francis Mark Cann (1838-1928), a surgeon and general practitioner in Dawlish. Francis Cann had been born in Bruton, Somerset and his wife, Amy, in Exmouth.

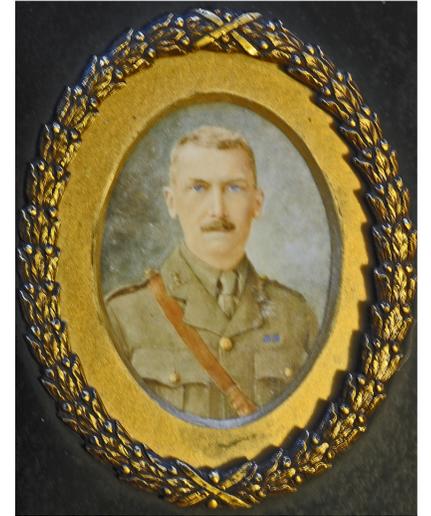
Richard Rooth had accepted an adjutantcy with the Poona Volunteers and was not with his regiment in action in the Boer War. In 1903 he took part in operations in the Aden Hinterland. He was appointed Major in 1906, and was stationed at Gravesend for some time. On the 7th June 1914 Richard Rooth was promoted Lieutenant-Colonel to command the 1st Battalion, then stationed in Madras. He sailed on the 13th June and was in Madras with his regiment on the 22nd September when the German light cruiser EMDEN quietly approached the city on the south eastern coast of India. At 9.30pm the ship opened fire on several large oil tanks and set them alight. The action lasted half an hour and before the shore batteries returned fire the EMDEN had sunk a small merchant ship in the harbour. Five sailors were killed and 26 were injured. EMDEN slipped away undamaged, but it was a severe blow to British morale.



Wm. J. Munns, Gravesend.



On the 19th November the regiment embarked for England and arrived at Plymouth on the 21st December 1914, from where they moved to Torquay. On January 7th, 1915, Lt Col Rooth delivered over the Colours of the Regiment to the safe-keeping of the Mayor and Corporation while the regiment was away on active service - Photo left.
Photo above - Lieut Col Rooth in full dress uniform with his daughter, Nancy Rooth (1908-2001).



Captain Richard Alexander Rooth to Miss Amy M. Cann.

A DAINTY ceremonial took place in the Parish Church, Dawlish, recently, the occasion being the marriage of Miss Amy M. Cann, the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. F. M. Cann, of Sefton House, Dawlish, with Captain Richard Alexander Rooth, Adjutant of the 2nd Battalion Royal Dublin Fusiliers, son of the late Mr. John Wilcoxon Rooth, Barrister-at-law of the Middle Temple. The pretty service, which was choral, was conducted by the Rev. W. P. Alford, the Vicar, assisted by the Rev. A. Everard. Mr. John Rooth, the bridegroom's brother, supported him as best man, and the five bridesmaids were Miss Mabel Rooth, cousin of the bridegroom, Miss Maud Nash, Miss May Cann, cousin of the bride, Miss Edith Jacob, and Miss Connie Pardoe. The bride, who was given away by her father, was gowned in rich white satin, prettily trimmed with orange blossom and Honiton lace, the latter being the gift of her grandmother, as was also the pearl crescent fastening her Honiton lace veil—the veil itself being the gift of her mother. She carried a shower bouquet of white roses, heather and orange blossom, and wore a diamond "103" brooch, which is the number of the regiment, both being the gifts of the bridegroom. The bridesmaids wore dainty white satin gowns with white Indian muslin ruffles and fichus, and large white fancy chip hats trimmed with big bows of white satin ribbon and roses. The roses of each hat were of a different colour, each bridesmaid carrying a bouquet to correspond, these being the gifts of the bridegroom, who also had presented them with pearl "103" brooches. Mrs. Cann, the bride's mother, was attired in a handsome dress of black and yellow merveilleux and silk, richly trimmed with lace to correspond, and carried a shower bouquet of Marchal Niel roses. The reception at Sefton House after the ceremony was very largely attended. At about four o'clock Captain and Mrs. Richard Rooth left for Weymouth en route for the Continent, the bride in a smart tailor-made coat and skirt of grey-blue covert coating, with white silk-revers edged with very narrow silver cord. With this she wore a pretty white silk blouse and paste buttons, and a Tuscan hat trimmed with white chiffon, plumes, and roses. There were over two hundred handsome wedding presents, which are destined, later on, to adorn the Indian residence of the young couple at Quetta.

The Gentlewoman 27th July 1895

Francis Mark Cann and his wife Amy were living at 6 Plantation Terrace in 1871 with three children, Amy Mary, 3, Francis John Hughtrede, 1 and George, 1 month. By 1881 the Cann family were at 5 Plantation Terrace, but there is no record of George, but another child, Mark, 1 has taken his place. Francis Cann was a doctor and surgeon and the family were supported by five servants. By 1901 the doctor had moved to Putney, where he died in 1928, and his oldest son continued the practice in Dawlish. The Kelly's Directory of 1914 shows that Francis John Hughtrede Cann M.B.Lond., M.R.C.S.Eng., L.R.C.P. Lond., (1869-1944) was a surgeon and medical practitioner and living at Sefton House. He was one of four doctors at the Cottage Hospital. The younger son, Mark (1880-1926), appears in the 1901 census as an apprentice at the Locomotive works at Crewe, and boarding at 49 Lawton St, Marks Coppenhall. There is no reference to military service in WW1 and he died on 31st March, 1926, having moved south to live with his father in Putney. Amy Mary Rooth remained a widow and died on 24 April 1950 at The Nursing Home, Dawlish, aged 82.



Lieut-Colonel Rooth at the head of his regiment at Torquay on the 7th January 1915, about to deliver the Colours of the Corps to the Mayor of Torquay, for safe-keeping.

