

“A strange motley of soldiers...”

Statement of Captain Seán Prendergast (BMH WS 755, p.123)

Na Fianna: Active Service in Easter Week and capture of the Royal Magazine Fort

- 1. Abstract:** In this lesson plan students will focus on youth involvement during the Easter Rising. The lesson's initial focus is on a single witness statement, which students discuss and analyse in groups. Following this, students search for related material across the Military Archives and Bureau of Military History websites. Students collate the material, and present it to the class and their community through a variety of contemporary news media formats. Ideas might include live-tweeting of Easter week events, mocking up calls to Joe Duffy's Liveline by worried parents of Na Fianna members involved in the fighting, preparing news items for TV, broadsheet or tabloid newspaper coverage.
- 2. Subject(s):** History, English
- 3. Themes covered:** Na Fianna
- 4. Estimated number of classes:** 3
- 5. Toolkit:**
 - a. Projector
 - b. Computer lab
 - c. Internet connection
- 6. Lesson Aims/Objectives:**
 - a. To develop students' ability to navigate the Bureau of Military History website
 - b. To assess the scope and scale of Na Fianna's active service during Easter Week
 - c. To identify key personalities and Na Fianna locations of Easter week (the capture of the Royal Magazine Fort in Phoenix Park offers a lot of scope)
 - d. To engage with and analyse primary sources
 - e. If the focus of the lesson is English, the lesson provides scope to explore the workings of a variety of news media, and examine their possibilities, limitations, and biases (see Methodology Exercise four)
- 7. Advance preparation required:**
 - a. Teacher should carry out a contextualisation class covering the Easter Rising (if necessary)
 - b. Teacher should ensure that the [Military Archives](#) and [Bureau of Military History](#) websites are white-listed on the school network
 - c. Teacher should print out copies of [Eamon Martin's witness statement](#) (see Material Needed 10. 'a') for each group of students
 - d. Teacher should print out the 'how to search' instruction sheet
- 8. Methodology:**
 - a. **Exercise one**
 - i. Students are introduced to tasks and materials they will be using in the lesson and for homework (see Materials Needed sections 'a' and 'c')- they could be shown 1911 photograph of Fianna members at Markiewicz residence [C.D.](#)

91/4 (see Materials Needed section 'b') as there is a key to the individuals featured and that could determine search of collections for more information about members of the featured group.

- ii. Students are divided into groups. Students read and take notes on [witness statement of Eamon Martin](#)
- iii. Students are given the opportunity to ask questions about the statement and its background.
- iv. For homework, students begin to explore the [Bureau of Military History](#) and [Military Service Pensions collection](#) based on the Magazine fort (if that is the focus of the lesson) or to find out more about key personalities involved in Na Fianna during Easter week. There should be a focus on principal personalities and places. Sample sources are suggested below (see Materials Needed section 'c'). An instruction sheet 'how to search the Bureau of Military History' and 'how to search the Military Service Pensions collection' should be handed out to each student

b. Exercise two

- i. Students report back their finding and share their experiences of using the archives with their group- a subsidiary task could be to add tips or hints to the instruction sheet to assist younger students on using the online archives.
- ii. Students continue to explore and the to further and finalise their research.

c. Exercise three

- i. Students create a variety of news media reactions to Na Fianna involvement in Easter week as a mechanism to convey what they learned during the research phase. Within their groups, the students could create newspaper articles, TV news reports, Tweets, mocked up Joe Duffy Liveline calls, Tabloid journalism, etc. Students may continue working on these as part of a homework assignment, if necessary.

d. Exercise four

- i. Students present and share the media reactions they have created. Students should offer an explanation as to why a particular mode of media communication was selected and why it was appropriate for use in consideration of the subject under investigation (for example, a human interest angle may support use of a LiveLine call/dialogue)
- ii. Feedback from teacher is offered
- iii. For an English based lesson exploring the nature of bias in news media reactions the teacher may wish to ask more probing questions regarding bias to elicit student understanding. Alternatively, the task could be adapted where one student represents a character and a second student presents the character's internal point of view and bias.

9. Assessment:

- a. Students will be assessed on their effectiveness at translating the knowledge and facts they have gathered into a diverse range of news media, their accuracy and use of appropriate language, style and form.
- b. Additional marks may be given for creativity or understanding of bias if appropriate to the lesson.

10. Material Needed:

- a. Witness statement – Eamon Martin (for examination by all students) on the attack of the Magazine fort, Phoenix Park, Easter Monday
 - i. <http://www.bureauofmilitaryhistory.ie/reels/bmh/BMH.WS0592.pdf#page=1>
- b. 1911 photo of Fianna members at Markiewicz residence
 - i. [C.D. 91/4](#)
- c. Sample sources relating to Na Fianna activities during Easter week
 - i. Note: These links can be treated as an initial starting-point if the teacher would prefer students to pursue their own research and find additional relevant material. The teacher may wish to withhold these resources from the class, and encourage them to seek out material independently, if this is the case, a little more guidance may be needed to direct the students to relevant materials and the instruction sheet on how to search online collections should be referred to/distributed.
 1. Witness statement, Joseph Reynolds, pp. 8-10. This statement lists the main sites occupied by Na Fianna and also lists provisional committee of control following 1916. The 1916 stories of the appointees could be a focus
 - a. <http://www.bureauofmilitaryhistory.ie/reels/bmh/BMH.WS0191.pdf#page=1>
 2. Witness statement, Thomas Dwyer, pp. 2-6. The activities of the Enniscorthy Sluagh.
 - a. <http://www.bureauofmilitaryhistory.ie/reels/bmh/BMH.WS1198.pdf#page=1>
 3. Witness statement, Garry Holohan, pp. 57-67. Details of operations before, during and after the attack on the Magazine Fort.
 - a. <http://www.bureauofmilitaryhistory.ie/reels/bmh/BMH.WS0328.pdf>
 4. Dependent's allowance application made in respect of Na Fianna Private, John Healy.. Healy was 16 years of age and was shot while delivering dispatches on Easter Tuesday, 1916.
 - a. http://mspcsearch.militaryarchives.ie/docs/files//PDF_Pensions/R1/1D352JohnHealy/W1D352JohnHealy.pdf
 5. Pension application, Patrick Daly, pp. 51, 57-8. Application includes a day by day account of his service as a member of Na Fianna during Easter week.
 - a. http://mspcsearch.militaryarchives.ie/docs/files//PDF_Pensions/R1/MSP34REF5541PatrickDaly/WMSP34REF5541PatrickDaly.pdf
 6. Pension application, William Charles Roe, pp. 46, 50-3. Member of Na Fianna and active in Boland's Bakery/Boland's Mills, Grand Canal Street, Dublin Missionary Hall and Northumberland Road, Ballsbridge, Dublin, during Easter week
 - a. http://mspcsearch.militaryarchives.ie/docs/files//PDF_Pensions/R1/MSP34REF21737WILLIAM%20C.ROE/WMSP34REF21737WILLIAMC.ROE.pdf

7. Pension application, James O'Brien, pp. 36-47, 51-4. Active in Enniscorthy Wexford during Easter week.
 - a. http://mspcsearch.militaryarchives.ie/docs/files//PDF_Pensions/R2/MSP34REF4836JamesOBrien/WMSP34REF4836JamesOBrien.pdf
8. Plan view of the Royal Magazine Fort, Phoenix Park (1883)
AD119293-010
 - a. <http://mpdsearch.militaryarchives.ie/masters/fsdocumentsx?q=310&fsdocument=1&test=1>
 - b. Additional plans of the fort can be viewed by going to the [Military Archives Maps, Plans and Drawings Collection](#) - clicking on 'Search the Collection', agreeing to the terms and conditions, and using search term 'Magazine'. Maps and plans relating to the Royal Magazine fort will be returned and highlighted in the Location pane of the results window.