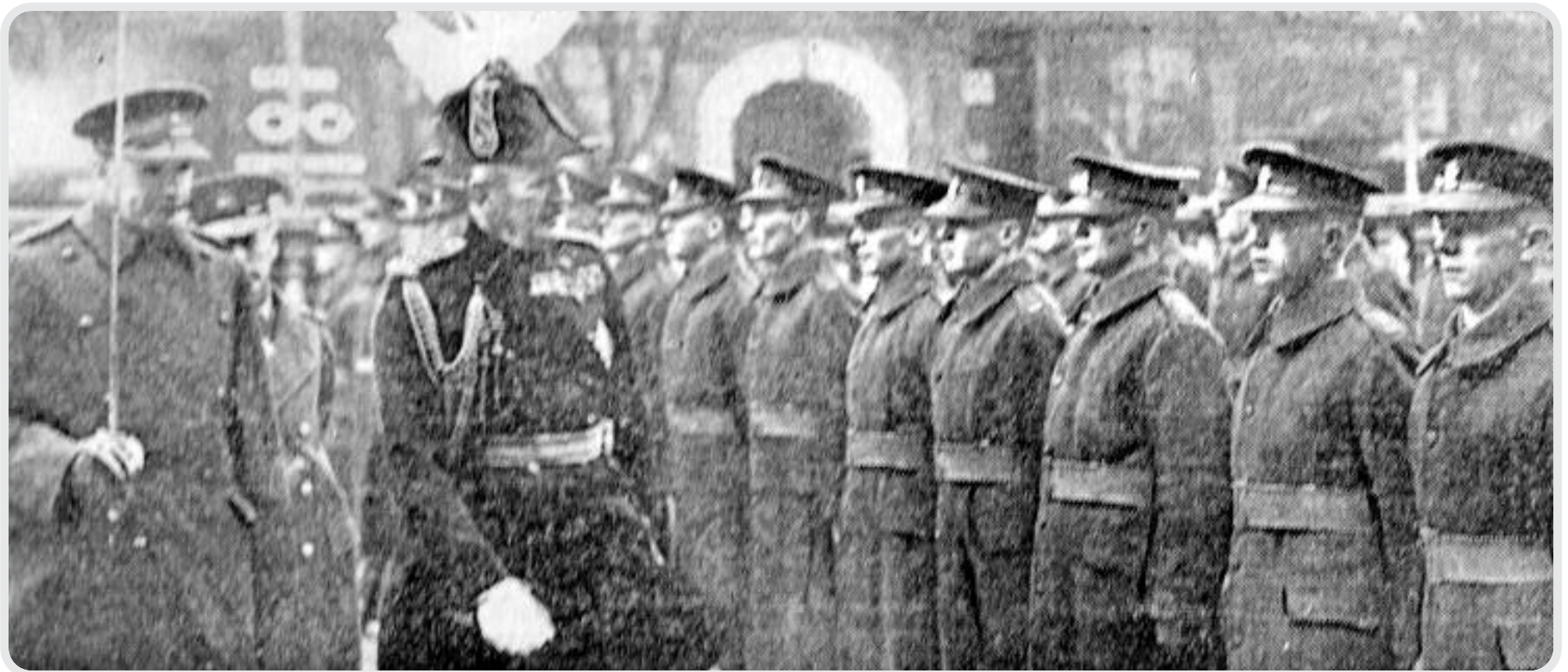


REMEMBERING THE SOMME

Dedication of the

The Belfast Cenotaph was unveiled in November 11, 1929 – at the eleventh hour, of the eleventh day, of the eleventh month on the eleventh year from the Armistice – by Viscount Allenby as a memorial to the war dead. This is how the News Letter reported the event



UPSTANDING: Viscount Allenby inspects troops before the unveiling of the Belfast Cenotaph in 1929

FOR two minutes at 11 o'clock yesterday – the eleventh anniversary of the Armistice – work was suspended in virtually every part of the Empire in memory of the million British dead who paid the price of victory.

Field-Marshal Viscount Allenby unveiled the Belfast War Memorial in the garden of Remembrance yesterday, in the presence of thousands of citizens.

In doing so he paid a striking tribute to the part played by Ulstermen in their country's service.

The new Cenotaph added to the dignity and solemnity of the Armistice service. It is a fine piece of architecture, and is a credit to the city.

During the day Lord Allenby fulfilled many engagements, and won the admiration of everyone with whom he came into contact. "May our Empire show the world the road to honest accord, goodwill and peace. Let us lead the way. The goal is in full view; the price can be ours. But we must press towards the mark, never faltering on the path trodden by the heroes whom we honour today."

This extract from Field-Marshal Viscount Allenby's address, when he unveiled the Belfast War Memorial, yesterday, was impressive, coming as it did from a professional soldier who has spent his life in fighting the King's enemies.

He is regarded by most critics as the greatest soldier of modern times, and Belfast is honoured in his presence on such an important occasion.

Armistice Day this year was a day of days for Belfast. In former years this grave ceremony was carried out in front of a temporary structure. Yesterday the citizens were able to assemble at a real Cenotaph at the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of

the eleventh month of the eleventh year – and render silent homage to the memory of those that are gone.

The Cenotaph, standing in the Garden of Remembrance, is a work of great beauty, and one can hardly conceive of a more fitting symbol to mark the city's appreciation and remembrance of her fallen sons.

At about 10 o'clock thousands of people made their way towards the City Hall. Ticket-holders were accommodated in the Garden of Remembrance, but in Donegall Square West and near the front entrance of the City Hall there was a dense mass of citizens. The windows of buildings in the vicinity were packed with spectators.

The arrival of a guard of honour of the Royal Ulster Rifles under Captain N. McGavin, MC, headed by their fine silver band under the charge of the bandmaster, Mr Wm Allan, LRAM, ARCM, was the signal for murmurs of approbation from the crowds. Various personages in Ulster life appeared from time to time and were recognised by the onlookers.

All eyes were directed towards the front entrance of the City Hall when the members of the Corporation, wearing their civic robes, marched in procession towards the Cenotaph. At the head was the Lord Mayor (Sir William Coates, Bart, DL), Lord Allenby came next. He stands about six feet three in height, and is well built and

looks what he is – a great general. He wore Field-Marshal's undress uniform, and one noticed that he had six rows of medal ribbons – six in each row.

He inspected the Rifle guard of honour, one from the British Legion, and one composed of ex-soldiers of his old regiment, the 5th Royal Irish Lancers.

Two sentries from the Rifles were posted at the base of the Cenotaph, and when everyone was in position, the service opened with "Land of Hope and Glory" (Edgar), played by the Rifles' band. Next came the hymn, "O God Our Help in Ages Past."

With bared heads, the vast audience listened to the words of a prayer offered by Rev J C Robertson, MA, BD, (President of the Methodist Church in Ireland). It ended with the words: "Grant that this Memorial may not only adorn our city, but also teach future generations to hate war; that so those who fell may not have died in vain." After this came the unveiling and dedication of the Cenotaph, which is reported elsewhere.

As 11 o'clock drew near, all traffic was halted, and two minutes before that hour the "Last Post" was sounded by buglers of the Rifles.

Then came the great silence, broken at the end of the two minutes by the notes of the "Reveille."

The laying on of wreaths – Lord Allenby placed the first one in position – occupied a long time. It was noticeable that very few ex-officers and ex-soldiers were in uniform. Most of them wore dark clothes, and medals were the only sign of war days. While this sad part of the proceedings was taking place the band played funeral marches. When it was over they headed the guard of honour back to barracks to the strains of a lively march.



HONOUR: Viscount Allenby meets Somme veterans