



When The Clock Struck in 1916: Close-Quarter Combat in the Easter Rising

Derek Molyneux, Darren Kelly

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‘Well, I’ve helped to wind up the clock – I might as well hear it strike.’ Michael Joseph O’Rahilly. The Easter Rising of 1916 was a seminal moment in Ireland’s turbulent history. For the combatants it was a no-holds-barred clash: the professional army of an empire against a highly motivated, well-drilled force of volunteers. What did the men and women who fought on the streets of Dublin endure during those brutal days after the clock struck on 24 April 1916? For them, the conflict was a mix of bloody fighting and energy-sapping waiting, with meagre supplies of food and water, little chance to rest and the terror of imminent attacks. The experiences recounted here include those of: 20-year-old Sean McLoughlin who went from Volunteer to Captain to Commandant-General in five days: his cool head under fire saved many of his comrades; Volunteer Robert Holland, a sharpshooter who continued to fire despite punishing rifle recoil; Volunteer Thomas Young’s mother, who acted as a scout, leading a section through enemy-infested streets; the 2/7th Sherwood Foresters NCO who died when the grenade he threw at Clanwilliam House bounced off the wall and exploded next to his head; 2nd Lieutenant Guy Vickery Pinfield of the 8th Royal Hussars, who led the charge on the main gate of Dublin Castle and became the first British officer to die in the Rising. This account of the major engagements of Easter Week 1916 takes us onto the shelled and bullet-ridden streets of Dublin with the foot soldiers on both sides of the conflict, into the collapsing buildings and through the gunsmoke.

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