

Private John Mahony[©]

Regimental number: 492

2nd Battalion, Prince of Wales's Leinster Regiment (Royal Canadians)

born: 15 October 1888–died: 7 April 1916

John Mahony, whose surname was misspelt as Mahoney¹ by the chaplain who recorded his death, was born on 15 October 1888 in Kingstown, Union of Rathdown, County of Dublin.² A seaport and market town about five miles from Dublin on the south shore of Dublin Bay, Kingstown was known as Dun Laoghaire for centuries before it was renamed in 1821 by agreement of King George IV.³

John's parents, Christopher Mahony and Julia, née Molloy, were married on 3 August 1879 in St. Michael's Church, Kingstown.⁴ At the time of their marriage, Christopher was a labourer and Julia was a servant.

John was the sixth of their seven children; the others were Patrick (b. 1880), Christopher (b. 1881), James (b. 1883), Mary Catherine (b. 1885), Alice (b. 1886), and Joseph (b. 1890). Unfortunately, Christopher Mahony died suddenly on 9 October 1897 at the age of 44, when the family was living at 'Molloy's Court,' York Street, Kingstown.⁵

According to the 1901 Census there were three private dwellings in Molloy's Court, each consisting of a single room with a single front window. Julia, the head of the household, was living in one of the houses with five of her children and two of her brothers: Patrick, aged 43, and Joseph, 34. Julia's two eldest sons were labourers like their uncles. Her third son, James, who could read and write, was a messenger. Julia's eldest daughter was a domestic servant; her younger daughter was still in school.⁶ John, aged 12, and Joseph, aged 10, were living in the Artane (or Artaine) Industrial School on the outskirts of North Dublin.⁷

Established in 1870, Artane Industrial School, also known as St. Joseph's, was for Roman Catholic boys up to the age of 14. Though technically students could be enrolled voluntarily, the vast majority were "committed by magistrates for such matters as destitution, neglect, truancy and minor offences." The boys received a basic education, including reading, writing, grammar, dictation, arithmetic, and geography. Some more advanced subjects were also taught, such as algebra, geometry, book-keeping and commercial correspondence. Training in any of a wide variety of trades was also available; for example, all of the clothing worn by the 'inmates' was produced within the school.⁸

By 1911 the Mahony family seems to have prospered, living at 26 Barrett Street in Kingstown, a home with between two and four rooms and three windows in the front of the house. Julia was still the head of the household with six of her children, aged 21 to 30, living with her. All are described as capable of reading and writing. Sons Patrick, Christopher and Joseph were general labourers; daughters Mary and Alice were general servants. John was employed as a van driver.⁹ The only child not living at home was James, who had married Elizabeth Moore in 1909. Their occupations are also listed as labourer and servant, respectively, but they lived with their baby son, Christopher, in what seems to have been a substantially larger home of seven to nine rooms with seven front windows.¹⁰

Although it is not known exactly when he signed up, John likely enlisted in October 1914¹¹ and was assigned to the 2nd Battalion of the Prince of Wales's Leinster Regiment (Royal Canadians).

The Leinster Regiment had roots in the 100th Regiment of Foot of the British army. Known as the County of Dublin Regiment, the 100th served in Canada from 1805 until 1812, when its title was changed to the HRH The Prince Regent's County of Dublin Regiment. The regiment was disbanded in 1818 but re-established when Canada offered troops to assist in quelling the Indian Rebellion that began in 1857. The regiment received its colours from the Prince of Wales (later King Edward VII) in 1859 and in 1875 was formally recognized as the successor of the earlier regiment that had served in Canada.¹² Reorganization of the British Army in 1881 saw the 100th amalgamated with the 109th Regiment of Foot (Bombay Infantry) to become the Prince of Wales's Leinster Regiment (Royal Canadians). The 2nd Battalion landed at St. Nazaire, France, as part of the 17th Brigade in the 6th Division in September 1914;¹³ they transferred to the 73rd Brigade, 24th Division in October 1915.¹⁴ When John Mahony died on April 7, 1916, the battalion was in trenches 136–140 at Messines (now Mesen, Belgium), approximately 15 kilometres south of Ypres, with the 13th Middlesex Regiment and the 12th Royal Fusiliers.¹⁵ According to the chaplain's entry, John died of a wound to his thigh; he had a letter to his mother in his pocket.¹⁶

John is buried in the Bailleul Communal Cemetery Extension, Plot II D 209, in the Pas-de-Calais region of northern France. His mother had his headstone inscribed with the words "Dear is the grave where he is laid, dear is the memory that will not fade."¹⁷ John was awarded the British War Medal (for service overseas between 1914 and 1918), the Victory Medal (for service in an operational theater) and the 1914/15 Star (for service between 5 August 1914 and 31 December 1915).¹⁸ These three medals were sometimes irreverently referred to as Pip, Squeak and Wilfred: Pip represented either the 1914 or the 1914–15 Star, only one of which could be awarded to a soldier; Squeak represented the British War Medal; and Wilfred represented the Victory Medal.¹⁹ The names were those of the characters in a popular British comic strip from the period.

John's mother died on 29 July 1929 at the age of 75, still living at 26 Barrett Street.²⁰ With regard to his siblings: Christopher died on 16 February 1918, aged 36, a bachelor;²¹ Patrick died on 8 July 1925, aged 42, also a bachelor;²² Mary died on 14 January 1945, aged 59, a spinster;²³ and Joseph died on 29 December 1948, aged 58, never having married.²⁴ Both Patrick and Joseph died at 26 Barrett Street. John's married brother James died on 21 February 1919 of influenza at the age of 36.²⁵ Alice, the youngest child in the family, married Matthew Byrne on 12 February 1914;²⁶ they had a daughter, Jane, in September 1915.²⁷ Alice passed away on 11 November 1920, aged 33, at 23 Barrett Street.²⁸

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¹ "No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station," *British Isles Family History Society of Greater Ottawa* (www.bifhsgo.ca: accessed 2 September 2019), entry for Mahoney [sic], J.

² "Civil Records–Birth," *Irish Genealogy* (www.irishgenealogy.ie: accessed 14 August 2019), entry for John Mahony. All information about the births of John's siblings comes from this source.

³ "Kingstown," *Library Ireland* (www.libraryireland.com: accessed 30 September 2019)

⁴ "Civil Records–Marriage," *Irish Genealogy* (www.irishgenealogy.ie: accessed 14 August 2019), entry for Christopher Mahony

⁵ "Civil Records–Death," *Irish Genealogy* (www.irishgenealogy.ie: accessed 14 August 2019), entry for Christopher Mahony

⁶ "1901 Ireland Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 14 August 2019), entry for Julia Mahony, County: Dublin, District: Kingstown, Townland/Street: Molly's Court

⁷ "1901 Ireland Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 14 August 2019), entry for John Mahony, County: Dublin, District: Drumcondra Rural, Townland/Street: Artaine South

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- ⁸ "St. Joseph's Industrial School, Artane, Dublin, Ireland," *Children's Homes* (www.childrenshomes.org.uk: accessed 14 August 2019)
- ⁹ "1911 Ireland Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 15 August 2019), entry for John Mahony, County: Dublin, District: Kingstown No. 1, Townland/Street: Barrett Street
- ¹⁰ "1911 Ireland Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 15 August 2019), entry for James Mahony, County: Dublin, District: Kingstown No. 1, Townland/Street: Willow Bank
- ¹¹ Based on "War Gratuity Calculator" (<https://wargratiuity.wordpress.com/2015/08/16/gratuity-calculator/>: accessed 27 February 2020); "UK, Army Registers of Soldiers' Effects, 1901–1929," entry for John Mahoney [sic]
- ¹² "The Leinster Regiment," *The Irish in Uniform* (<http://homepage.eircom.net/~tipperaryfame/index.html>: accessed 27 February 2020)
- ¹³ "Prince of Wales's Leinster Regiment (Royal Canadians)," *Wikipedia* (www.wikipedia: accessed 27 February 2020)
- ¹⁴ "First World War–Leinster Regiment", *Combined Irish Regiments Association* (www.ciroca.org.uk: accessed 13 March 2020)
- ¹⁵ "April 1916," *13th Middlesex Regt - WWI - War Diary* (<https://13thmiddlesexww1.wordpress.com>: accessed 13 March 2020)
- ¹⁶ "No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station," entry for Mahoney, J.
- ¹⁷ *Commonwealth War Graves Commission* (www.cwgc.org: accessed 27 February 2020), entry for Private J. Mahony
- ¹⁸ "British Army WWI Medal Rolls Index Cards, 1914–1920," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 27 February 2020), entry for John Mahoney [sic]
- ¹⁹ "1914/15 Star," *Forces War Records* (www.forces-war-records.co.uk: accessed 13 March 2020)
- ²⁰ "Civil Records–Death," *Irish Genealogy* (www.irishgenealogy.ie: accessed 14 August 2019), entry for Julia Mahony
- ²¹ "Civil Records–Death," *Irish Genealogy* (www.irishgenealogy.ie: accessed 14 August 2019), entry for Christopher Mahony
- ²² "Civil Records–Death," *Irish Genealogy* (www.irishgenealogy.ie: accessed 14 August 2019), entry for Patrick Mahony
- ²³ "Civil Records–Death," *Irish Genealogy* (www.irishgenealogy.ie: accessed 14 August 2019), entry for Mary Mahony
- ²⁴ "Civil Records–Death," *Irish Genealogy* (www.irishgenealogy.ie: accessed 2 October 2019), entry for Joseph Mahony
- ²⁵ "Civil Records–Death," *Irish Genealogy* (www.irishgenealogy.ie: accessed 14 August 2019), entry for James Mahony
- ²⁶ "Civil Records–Marriage," *Irish Genealogy* (www.irishgenealogy.ie: accessed 27 February 2020), entry for Alice Mahony
- ²⁷ "Civil Records–Births," *Irish Genealogy* (www.irishgenealogy.ie: accessed 27 February 2020), entry for Jane Byrne
- ²⁸ "Civil Records–Death," *Irish Genealogy* (www.irishgenealogy.ie: accessed 27 February 2020), entry for Alice Byrne