

MILITARY – GARRISON TOWN

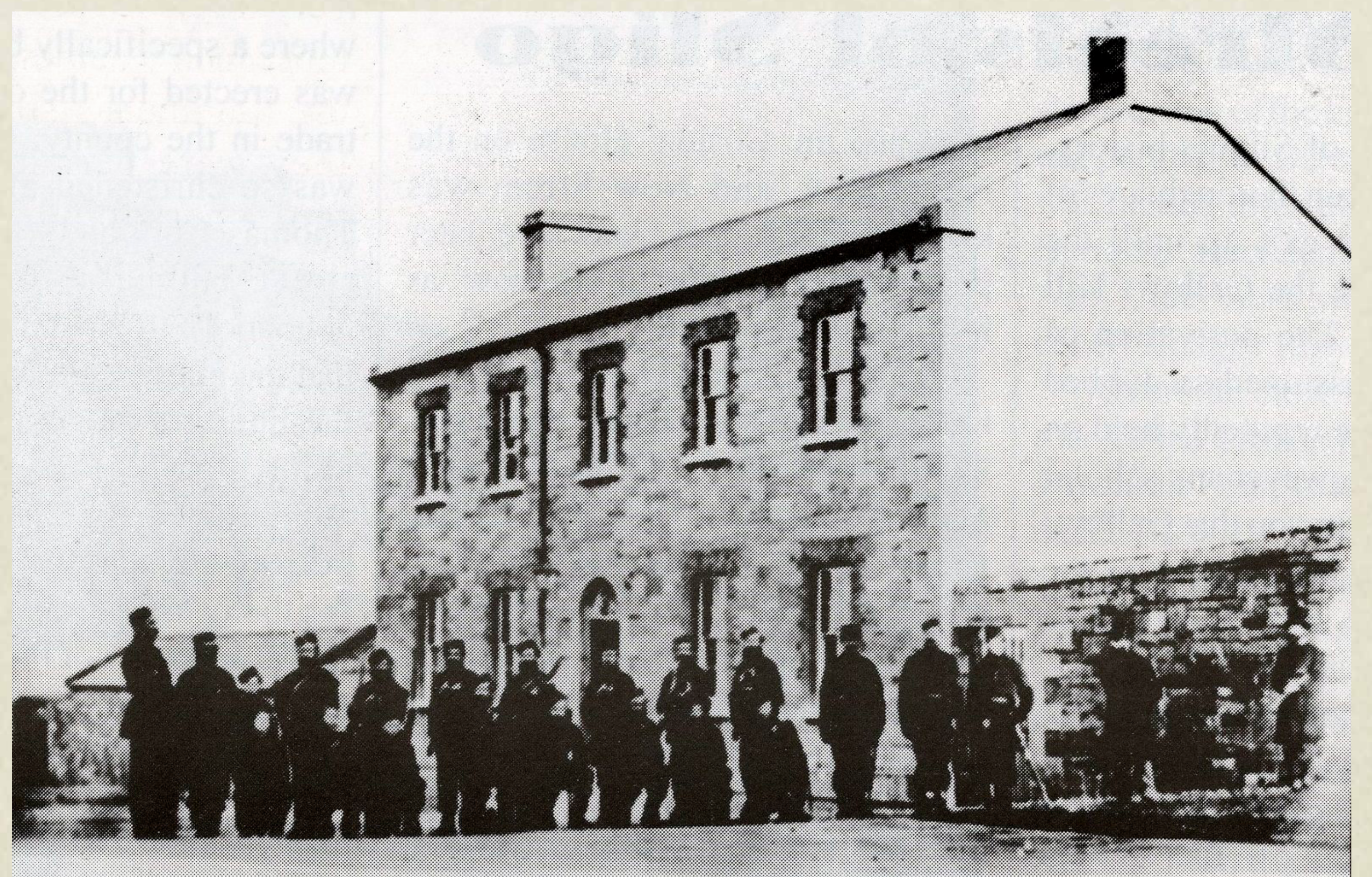


Sligo Barracks

A local military unit, the Sligo Militia, was formed in the early part of the 1700s. In 1878 it was designated as an artillery regiment, the only one in Connaught and named the 'The Duke of Connaught's Own Artillery Militia', later called the 8th Brigade N.I. Division Royal Artillery. At the height of recruitment it mustered 600 men. The Sergeant-Major instructed them in drill training and the Colonel drilled the men daily. They trained at Ballinode and later moved to Rosses Point and in the 1880s, when they were mustered into an Artillery Militia Corps, exercises were held at Cartron Cottage. They also trained with large 64 pounder guns at Bowmore, Rosses Point. In October 1909 as a result of the lack of recruits the Sligo Rifles were disbanded.

In the 1750s there were four military barracks in Sligo. The Strand Barracks in Barrack Street, the Middle Barracks in Holborn Street, the Horse Barracks in Bridge Street, the Old Stone Fort or Foot Barracks in Quay Street.

Since space was so cramped, every measure was taken to maximize it, such as folding beds. This was where the men slept, ate their meals and relaxed off duty. Each man was issued with a bed, a straw mattress, a blanket and sheets, and a barrack box. While a soldier's uniform and accoutrements would be placed about his bunk, his personal possessions would have to be placed in the box. A table and wood benches, wood stove and fuel box completed the necessary issue. Inspections were made every morning. Although cleanliness was stressed, the conditions in the barracks were poor.



Sligo Rifles, c.1875



Sligo Artillery, 1906

By the end of the nineteenth century only one military establishment still stood in Sligo town, this was the Strand Barracks in Barrack Street. From 1810 to 1820 it could accommodate three troops of Horse. In 1824 a new building was erected on the site. Three large dormitories were able to accommodate 72 officers and men. There was cook house and two water pumps served for ablutions. In the mid-1840s the barracks was enlarged to accommodate seven officers and 90 N.C.O.s and privates. A hospital was built for 15 patients. In 1846 the 88th Regiment of three officers and 70 privates were billeted there and Lieutenant James O'Brien was Barrack Master. At this time all the other Sligo barracks had disappeared.

The building was burnt to the ground in July 1922 by the Anti-treaty forces during the Civil War and in 1932 Sligo Corporation built Benbulbin terrace on the site.

A Typical Day For Soldiers in Garrison

5:30 a.m. Summer, Reveille.

6:30 a.m. Winter, Reveille.

After rising, a soldier would fold his bed, clean his berth, wash, and hang up accoutrements.

7:45 a.m. Bugle Call – 15 minutes to dress before breakfast.

8:00 a.m. Breakfast in the Barracks.

After breakfast, preparation would begin for morning inspection.

10:00 a.m. Morning Parade.

After parade, soldiers would be assigned duties such as fatigues, punishment parade, etc...

11:45 a.m. Bugle call – 15 minutes to Dinner.

12:00 p.m. Dinner.

After dinner, soldiers would be doing drill or more fatigues. Some were given free time which was used for school, gardening, heading into town, etc...

4:45 p.m. Bugle call – 15 minutes to Supper.

5:00 p.m. Supper.

After supper, more fatigues and free time.

8:00 p.m. Roll Call.

8:30 p.m. Back to Barracks.

9:00 p.m. Tattoo
(lights out, from October 1 to April 30).

10:00 p.m. Tattoo
(lights out, from May 1 to September 30)

