

MAUSER RIFLE

Related Objects:

Asgard, Ammunition Pouch (Pearse),
Homemade Bomb (Cocoa Tin), Razor (Clarke)



CURRICULUM LINKS

Working as an historian

Using evidence

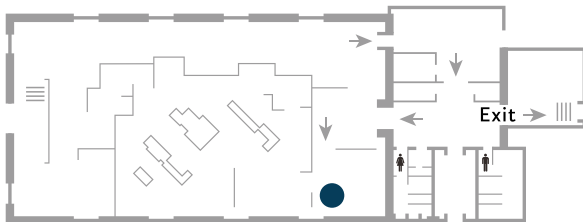
Time and chronology

Change and continuity: technology

Politics, conflict and society

1916 and the foundation of the state,

Key personalities



YOU CAN VIEW THIS OBJECT IN THE PROCLAIMING A REPUBLIC EXHIBITION

**COLLINS BARRACKS,
BENBURB ST, DUBLIN 7**

THINGS TO THINK AND TALK ABOUT

Gun-runnings - arming the rebels

- In 1914, 1,500 Mauser model rifles and ammunition were purchased in Germany and illegally imported into Ireland. Discuss the risks involved and why British authorities in Ireland did not stop the offloading of guns.
- Discuss the effects of the failed mission, led by Roger Casement in April 1916, to land an additional 20,000 rifles and ammunition from Germany in County Kerry:
 - » Hearing of the failed mission, Irish Volunteer leader Eoin MacNeill cancelled the Rising and published a countermanding order (on display in the Proclaiming a Republic exhibition at the National Museum).
 - » The failed mission affected the number of weapons the rebels could use and MacNeill's countermanding order had an impact on the turn-out of rebels during the Rising.
- What might have happened if the mission had been successful? What choices did Eoin MacNeill have?
 - » Roger Casement was arrested, trialed for treason and executed in August 1916.

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KEY PERSONALITIES:

Revolutionary Thomas Clarke - Fighting for a cause

Tom Clarke was a committed revolutionary and had joined the Irish Republican Brotherhood at the age of 18. In 1915 Tom Clarke and Sean MacDermott established the military committee of the IRB, which planned the Easter Rising in 1916. Clarke supported a rising in Ireland even if it could not be won. He maintained that one cannot wait for the perfect opportunity as it might never come along. During the Easter Rising Tom Clarke was stationed in the General Post Office. He did not hold any formal military rank but was recognised as one of the commanders in the GPO.

Thomas Clarke and people who were fighting with him in the 1916 Rising used a number of different weapons, including Mauser rifles, pistols, daggers and home-made bombs. An example of such a bomb, made from a cocoa tin, is on display in the Museum. Many rebels wore bandoliers and pouches, usually made from leather, to hold ammunition. Mauser rifles had strong recoil and their black powder bullets, once fired, gave away the shooter's position with a large cloud of smoke.

- What might it have felt like to carry a heavy rifle and pouches filled with ammunition?
- What might the rebels have felt when using them in Dublin in 1916?

Irish Volunteer Tom Walsh described using a Mauser rifle:

"In the excitement I did not heed the lectures and did not hold the gun correctly. The result was that [the first time I fired it] the butt hit me under the chin and knocked me out".

ACTIVITY IN THE MUSEUM

The central square at Collins Barracks is now called Clarke Square, after Thomas Clarke. On the walls you can see numbers denoting '100 paces' which British Army soldiers would have used in the past to practice their drill routines.

ACTIVITY

Line up at number 0 and walk in line up to number 50, counting your steps. A right-hand turn through the archway will bring you to the Proclaiming a Republic: The 1916 Rising exhibition, which also displays Clarke's spectacle case, stamp book and pencil. Nearby is also the Asgard exhibition where you can see the conserved vessel used for the gun-running and more of the Mauser rifles that were brought to Ireland in 1914.