

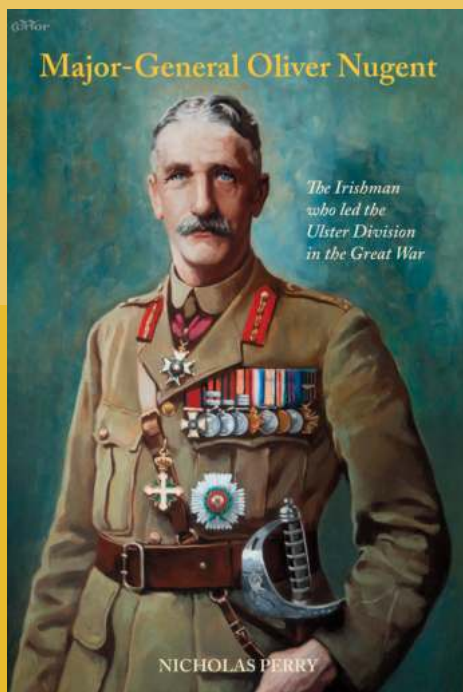
# Major-General Oliver Nugent

Oliver Nugent, Ireland's longest-serving divisional commander of the Great War, led the Ulster Division on the western front from 1915 to 1918. Having to withstand the challenges of divisional command during pivotal moments of the war, from the heroic but doomed assault at Thiepval in July 1916, through the triumph of Messines and the heartbreaking failure at Ypres Nugent also had to manage the Ulster Division's political dimension, with its roots in the pre-war Ulster Volunteer Force.

The tensions that arose between him and politicians at home over issues like Irish recruitment, relations with the 16th (Irish) Division and, especially, Ulster's place in a post-war political settlement, reveal not only the conflict between military and political priorities but also the divisions within Irish unionism during the Great War period.

More widely, Nugent's career provides a unique insight into the political decline of the Irish landed class as well as their enduring military tradition. *Major-General Oliver Nugent: The Irishman who led the Ulster Division in the Great War* charts Nugent's story, from his financial struggles as a young landlord in the 1880s, to his regimental service on India's north-west frontier and in the Boer war, to his involvement with the UVF in Cavan in 1914, his role in quelling political unrest in post-war India, his return to an Ireland convulsed by revolution and his adaptation to life in the Irish Free State.

This study seeks to shed light on these different aspects of Nugent's career by drawing not only on his extensive personal papers and diaries in the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland, but also on papers still in the family's possession and the correspondence of key subordinates never previously used.



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