

on the rugby and hurling teams, sang in the operettas, suffered the bullies and suddenly found ourselves seniors. Before we had realized what happened we were young men sitting our final exams. Secondary school ended for me in June 1939, and by the time of our second college reunion in the autumn of 1940, some of my classmates had already died in the war. The sweet days of youth were nearly past and we left Roscrea forever to make our way through a world in turmoil. The choice of a career led me to an engineering school in a Dublin university, but by the time of my first examination in June of 1940, I was in the Irish army.

According to grandfather's notes that war was also starting to effect his woollen mill:

'Our biggest customer during the first year of the Emergency was the Controller of Army Stores. It was simple to deal with his case; he wanted our total output and he got it. History records that an Irish brigade defeated a surprise attack clad only in their nightshirts but thanks to the Irish mills, there was no danger of our army being called on to prove they could do so again. One item in particular that we were called upon to supply about which we feel entitled to boast a bit was the bunting in green, white and orange to make flags. This had never been made in the country before and we feel proud that we were able to make the national flag in the height of the Emergency from Irish wool. Strangely enough we had no trouble in dyeing the correct shade of orange, although we made several attempts before we got a satisfactory green.'

He went on to describe the difficulties which both his mill and all the other Irish woollen mills experienced during the war; shortages of wool, dyes and oils so necessary in the processing. He was a religious man and he placed his trust in the Lord adding a little prayer of his own: 'O Lord, don't send anything my way this day that you and I can't handle — together.'

Chapter Three

IRELAND AND AVIATION HISTORY

Ireland, land of dreams

But — aviation has not passed you by.

Its wispy trails and wondrous shapes

Daily grace your velvet sky.

The powerful but soft rhythmic whine of the four large engines of an Irish jumbo jet echo down into those places from where many of the brave aeronauts of long ago made their first flights in wicker baskets and cloth balloons. The big metal Boeing, when fully laden, will weigh 710,000 pounds, and all its controls are hydraulically powered by eight separate pumps serving four independent systems. The electronics are routed through many computers, and its two automatic pilots are capable of making a completely blind landing. The air conditioning would rival that of any modern hotel, and emergency equipment is comprehensive: fire protection devices and circuits are distributed throughout the cockpit, the cabin and the engines. The birdproof windows are extremely thick and are heated