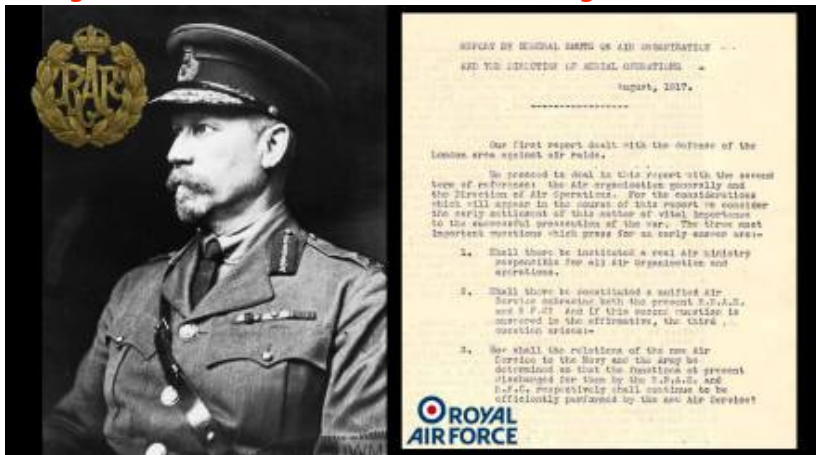


remembrance ni

Royal Air Force Centenary



General Smuts with the report which recommended establishing the RAF

1. The Royal Flying Corps
2. General Jan Smuts' key role in establishing the Royal Air Force
3. First RFC squadron in France in WW1 was led by an Armagh officer
4. NI Roll of Honour, Part 1

The Royal Flying Corps



The Royal Flying Corps (RFC) was formed on the 13/04/1912 and comprised a Military Wing, Naval Wing, Central Flying School and the Royal Aircraft Factory. The RFC was formed out of the balloon sections and experimental air sections of the Royal Engineers when the progress of aviation created a need for an official Corps. During the First World War the Royal Flying Corps and the Royal Naval Air Service (RNAS) were the aerial force of the British armed forces. Among other tasks the RFC provided aerial support for the British Army, flew bombing missions and engaged in aerial combat.

The RFC was a Corps of the Army, and thus had Army ranks, regulations and procedures.

ARMY FORM 8 2022 C

ROYAL FLYING CORPS

MILITARY WING



VACANCIES EXIST

FOR

Men aged 18 to 30 of various mechanical trades, and others of good education.

They should apply to the nearest Recruiting Officer, or write for particulars to Headquarters Royal Flying Corps (M.W.), South Farnborough, Hants.

PAY.

2nd Class Air Mechanic,	2/- per day.
1st " " "	4/- " "
Serjeant " " "	6/- " "
Warrant Officer	9/- " "



ARMY AIRSHIP DETAIL



ARMY AEROPLANE DETAIL

Men selected to be trained as Flyers will receive in addition 2/- or 4/- per diem.

Free Clothing and necessaries, quarters, rations, fuel and light.

One month's furlough per annum on full pay.

When transferred to the Army Reserve a soldier of the Corps will receive an annual gratuity of £10 in lieu of Reserve Pay.



If, while serving in the Reserve, he is placed on the first Reserve as a flyer, he receives a further £10 per annum, subject to his performing a Quarterly Flying Test.

Men of the following trades and professions are specially required:

Blacksmiths Electricians,
Instrument Repairers,
Motor Fitters
and Riggers.



All of the initial personnel of the RFC Military Wing comprised officers and men who transferred from the Army, and the Army continued to be a significant source of personnel for the RFC, either by permanent transfers,



secondment or temporary attachment (the latter categories applying particular to observers).

Officers could initially enter the RFC in two ways: by transfer from an Army Unit or by joining the Special Reserve. The latter were sometimes known as 'civilian pilots' as they generally had no military experience. Early Special Reservists included well-known pre-war pilots such as Geoffrey de Havilland and BC Hucks, famous for touring the country 'looping the loop'. They were looked down upon by some military officers, some of whom had experience in the Boer War and other campaigns.

Subsequently it was possible to join the RFC directly and be entered on the 'General List'. Once the officer's service in the RFC was over



he resigned his commission. There was thus an advantage in joining the Army first and applying for a transfer to the RFC, in that once the RFC service was completed the officer would return to his Army unit for continued employment.

In order to enter the RFC as a pilot it was initially a requirement that the applicant acquire a Royal Aero Club aviators certificate at their own expense. If accepted into the RFC a nominal 75 pounds would be refunded. This requirement was dropped in July 1916, although an individual could still apply for an RAeC 'ticket'.

A new officer would normally be appointed as a temporary 2nd Lieutenant or Probationary 2nd

Lieutenant and enter the Recruits Depot. He would be given ground training at one of the Schools of Instruction (primarily Reading and Oxford). If destined to be a pilot he would undertake further training at one of the private Flying Schools taken over by the RFC, the Central Flying School or one of the Reserve Aeroplane Squadrons ('RAS'), later renamed Reserve Squadrons ('RS'), then Training Squadrons ('TS'), and subsequently merged into Training Depot Stations ('TDS'). Alternatively he could be trained as an Observer or Balloon Officer. Officers undertaking ground duties would generally be appointed as Equipment Officers.

The Naval Wing split from the RFC on 01/07/1914 to become the Royal Naval Air Service, under the control of the Admiralty. On the 1st April 1918 the RFC merged with the RNAS to form the Royal Air Force (RAF).

**4,365 men
of
The Royal Flying Corps
died in service.**

General Jan Smuts' key role in establishing the Royal Air Force



August 2017 marked the centenary of the report to form the Royal Air Force (RAF). The idea of an independent Air Force from Navy or Army control is now officially 100+ years old, and one key South African statesman, General Jan Smuts, gave birth to it.

Today, if you walk into the Royal Air Force Private Club in Mayfair, London you are greeted by a bust of Jan Smuts in the foyer, it stands there as an acknowledgement to the man who founded what is now one of the most prestigious and powerful air forces in the world – The RAF.

So how did it come to be that a South African started The Royal Air Force and why the need to have a separate and independent arm of service?

Simply put, during World War 1, the British Army and the Navy developed their own air-forces in support of their own respective ground and naval operations. The Royal Flying Corps had been born out of the Air Battalion of the Royal Engineers and was under the control of the British Army. The Royal Naval Air Service was its naval equivalent and was controlled by the Admiralty.

However, the use of air power in World War 1 was developing beyond the immediate tactical use of aircraft by the Navy and the Army. In Great Britain the civilian population had been on the receiving end of extensive German bombing raids from Zeppelin airships. The public outrage and the psychological effects of this bombing was having a significant impact on British politicians.

In reaction to this, the politicians proposed the creation of a long-range bombing force both as a retaliation and also as a means of disrupting enemy war production. There were also



**General
Smuts**

continuing concerns about aircraft supply and priorities between the services.

The British Prime Minister, Lloyd George asked General Jan Smuts to join his War Cabinet (the supreme authority governing Great Britain and her Empire's forces in World War 1). Lloyd George then commissioned General Jan Smuts to report on two issues:

Firstly to look into arrangements for Home Defence against bombing and secondly, air

organisation generally and the direction of aerial operations.

Smuts is generally accredited with improving British air defence and answering the first priority.

However it was 'Smuts report' of August 1917 in response to the second of these questions that led to the recommendation to establish a separate Air Service. In making his recommendations Smuts commented that

“the day may not be far off when aerial operations with their devastation of enemy lands and destruction of industrial and populous centres on a vast scale may become the principal operations of war, to which the older forms of military and naval operations may become secondary and subordinate”.

Given this new dimension he commented that it was important that the design of aircraft and engines for such operations should be settled in accordance with the policy which would direct their future strategic employment. On these grounds he argued there was an urgent need to create an Air Ministry and that this Ministry should sort out the amalgamation of the two air services.



The War Cabinet during WW1, General Smuts seated front, far right

The War Cabinet accepted this recommendation to amalgamate the two separate air forces under one single and independent Air Force. Smuts was then asked to lead an Air Organisation Committee to put it into effect.

The Air Force Bill received Royal assent from the King on the 29 November 1917, which gave the newly formatted Air Force the prefix of 'Royal' (up to that point the idea was to call it the 'Imperial Air Force').

The RAF was officially formed on the 1 April 1918 with the amalgamation of the Royal Naval Air Service and the Royal Flying Corps. Following which Lord Rothermere was appointed on 3 January 1918 as the first Secretary of State for Air and an Air Council established.

To emphasise the merger of both army and naval aviation in the new service, to appease the 'senior service' i.e. the Navy, many of the titles of officers were deliberately chosen to be of a naval character, such as Flight Lieutenant, Wing Commodore, Group Captain and Air Commodore.

The newly created Royal Air Force was the most powerful air force in the world on its creation, with over 20,000 aircraft and over 300,000 personnel (including the Women's Royal Air Force). It now qualifies as the oldest independent Air Force in the World.



First RFC squadron in France in WW1 was led by an Armagh officer

Number 2 Wing RFC was the first to land in France . The Commanding Officer was Major CJ Bourke from Armagh and originally of the Royal Irish Regiment. Of the one hundred aircrew who formed this first deployment in August 1914, about 20 per cent were either Irish or from Irish regiments.

Charles Bourke was one of the earliest British Army officers to consider air power in depth.

He served in the Boer War and for three years on the West African Frontier. Captain 1909. He learned to fly in France 1910. 1911 serving as a Captain in the Army Balloon School. On 13/05/1912, Burke became the commanding officer of the Flying Corps' No 2 Squadron and was promoted to major. The squadron established the first operational military airbase in the United Kingdom.

He was mentioned in Sir John French's despatch on 08/10/1914. The following month, on 29/11/1914, Burke was appointed the first commanding officer of No 2 Wing of the Royal Flying Corps and he set up his headquarters at

Saint-Omer. His wing comprised Nos 5 and 6 Squadrons.

In 1915 Burke was involved in recruiting for the RFC in Canada. As well as directly recruiting personnel, Burke suggested that training aerodromes might be established in Canada under British control.

From February to June 1916, he served as the Commandant of the Central Flying School. In the summer of 1916 he re-joined the Royal Irish Regiment. He died commanding a battalion of East Lancashire Regiment.

In 1915 Burke was involved in recruiting for the RFC in Canada. As well as directly recruiting personnel, Burke suggested that training aerodromes might be established in Canada under British control. From February to June 1916, he served as the Commandant of the Central Flying School.

In the summer of 1916 Burke rejoined his old regiment, the Royal Irish Regiment, which was suffering a severe shortage of officers. Burke was killed in action on 09/04/1917, whilst commanding the 1st Battalion of the East Lancashire Regiment.

It was the first day of the Battle of Arras and he was visiting the right, front post of B Company when it was hit by a shell. Both Burke and his orderly, Lance Corporal R Pentland were killed. He was the youngest son of Michael Charles Christopher Burke and Amy Burke, of Ballinahone House, Armagh, and husband to Beatrice O. Burke, Stoney Cockbury, Winchcombe, Glos.

Burke is buried at the Point-du-Jour Military Cemetery, Athies, France in Plot: III. C. 2. His orderly is buried next to him. Men of Thomond Memorial at St Mary's Cathedral (Church of Ireland), Limerick.

RFC and RAF from Northern Ireland

Roll of Honour

A - B

+ANDREWS, William James Morrison

Royal Flying Corps. Second Lieutenant. Died 04/06/1917. Age 26. Royal School Dungannon 1903 - 1908. He studied engineering in London

and by December 1916, James had joined the RFC. In May 1917 he was promoted to 2nd Lieutenant and began training as a pilot. he was killed in a flying accident on Salisbury Plain. Eldest son of Alexander and Violet Andrews, Chapel Road, Dungannon. Drumcoo Cemetery, Dungannon.

+BELL, John Mercer Grimshaw

Royal Air Force. 7th Squadron. Lieutenant. Formerly of Royal Field Artillery. MC. Died 11/11/1918. Appointed Temporary Lieutenant 18/02/1918, London Gazette. Holywood. Helen's Bay C of I WM.

+BAMFORD, Joseph Lamont

Royal Flying Corps. 17th Squadron. Formerly Royal Scots Fusiliers and RNAS. Croix de Guerre with palms (France). Twice Mentioned in Despatches. Died 20/08/1917. Age 23. Son of Joseph and Margaret Bamford (nee Hazlett), Main St., Portrush. Salonika (Lembet Road) Military Cemetery, Greece

+BANNISTER, Herbert Stanley

Royal Air Force. 10th Canadian Infantry (Alberta Regiment). Died 21/08/1918. Age 30. RBAI.

Flying accident, Western France. Son of Peter and Jane Bannister, of Belfast. Boulogne Eastern Cemetery, Pas de Calais, France. RBAI WM

+BARRETT, Ernest William

Royal Flying Corps. Captain. 29th Squadron. Died 29/05/1916. Age 26. He was educated at Campbell College, Royal School, Armagh; and Queen's University, Belfast. He was a noted athlete and a well known cricketer and football player, as well as a keen golfer. Ernest Barrett spent five years working on an Australian sheep station and then he worked as the assistant manager on a large rubber plantation in Singapore. Shortly after the outbreak of the Great War he returned to London and gained a commission in the Royal Flying Corps. Captain Barrett was killed on May 29th when on patrol duty, in an attack on two German machines, having the previous day attacked and skilfully outmanoeuvred a Fokker. He was shot in the head during an aerial duel with two German planes. His plane crash-landed behind his own lines and his body was recovered that evening. His funeral was conducted by a Rev Preston, Church of England Chaplain to the Forces. After this bereavement Ernest's sister Daisy had a

very quiet wedding in St Anne's Cathedral Belfast on 28/07/1916. She married Captain RB Purce from Ballymoney who was serving with the Royal Army Medical Corps. Captain Purce was due to return to the front on 4 August having come home on special leave from France for the wedding. The best man at the wedding was Daisy's brother Cadet St Clair Edward John Barrett (10th Reserve Battalion Royal Irish Fusiliers, Newtownards). Norman was the first of the three Barrett brothers to die during the Great War, Ernest the second and Knox the third. Son of James Hunter Barrett JP and Eleanor Jane Barrett (nee Hughes). Lijssenthoek Military Cemetery, West-Vlaanderen, Belgium. Bangor Masonic Lodge 286 RH. Bangor WM. Bangor RBL plaque. Bangor Parish.

+BENNET, Trevor Moutray

Royal Irish Rifles. 10th Battalion, attached Royal Flying Corps. 70th Sqn, MC. Killed in Action 10/11/1916 during an aerial combat, aged 19. Trevor was the son of James Bennet, a retired banker, of 1 Chlorine Place, University Road, Belfast, and Catherine Adeline Bennet. He was born on 05/02/1897 in Belavon, Belmont,

Belfast. Before RBAI, he attended Methodist College, Belfast. He was working in the linen



trade, and joined the Ulster Volunteer Force in 1913, followed by the Ulster Division on its formation. He was gazetted to Second lieutenant on 22/09/1914 and promoted to Lieutenant the following year, serving in France and Flanders from October 1915. He took part in the advance on Thiepval on 01/07/1916, and before becoming attached to the RFC in September, was awarded the Military Cross. The citation, published in the London Gazette on 20/10/1916, reads as follows - "For conspicuous gallantry in action when his platoon suffered heavy casualties, he rallied all available men and got them forward into the enemy's lines' Later, when put in charge of an attack, he reached his objective, consolidated it and held it against repeated bombing attacks." He was killed in aerial combat on 10/11/1916 while flying a

Fienvillers Sopwith 1½ Strutter. Lt Morton Allport of the RFC was also killed in the incident. The plane came down behind the German lines. Major Laurence, RFC, wrote "he was just the sort of fellow we want. He had taken very quickly to the work, and had made a very keen and good observer. He was always so cheery and willing too, and we shall all miss him very much. He was a fine brave boy, and I shall always think of him with admiration." Captain Vancour, RFC wrote, "it was a frightful blow to us all when your son went down, for he was the most popular in the mess, and we all thought a great deal of him. He was always so cheery and full of life and such a plucky little fellow. Major Gordon, 2nd in command, 10th Royal Irish Rifles, after the fighting at Thiepval, wrote "Under the most difficult circumstances and murderous fire, he behaved with coolness and gallantry for two whole days and nights, in spite of his being the only officer left in the company. I am sure you will feel proud of him, as we all do." He was originally buried where he was found, to the south east of Bapaume, in a spot described as "a few yards west of the Rocquigny-Le-Mesnil road and a few yards north of the railway, close to the point where the railway cuts the road." Hermies Hill British Cemetery, Pas De Calais, France. RBAI WM

+BOYD, Henry

Royal Air Force. Lieutenant. Died 25/08/1918. Age 19. Bangor Grammar School 1912 - 14. Born Belfast. Son of William and Margaret (nee Beattie) Boyd, who lived in Hoburn Ave, and later Fareham Pk, in Bangor, before moving to Santa Cruz, California. Bangor GS WM

+BROWN, H

Royal Air Force. Lieutenant. RBAI WM.

+BROWNE, William Angus

Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, 8th. Battalion, attached Royal Flying Corps. 53rd Squadron. Reported missing in action on 21/09/1917. He was killed on that date. Age 24. Originally formed at Catterick on 15/05/1916, it was planned to use 53 Squadron as a training squadron, but in the December of that year it was sent to St Omer in France in the Corps reconnaissance role. The Squadron operated BE2Es until April 1917, when these were replaced by RE8s, which it continued to use for the remainder of the war. William Angus Browne attended the Belfast Municipal Technical Institute to do an engineering course and on 01/09/1914 he joined

QUB OTC. He was the younger son of William and Eleanor Browne, Tubber-na-carrig, Kircubbin and Agincourt Avenue, Belfast. He was buried at Post - du - hem military Cemetery, La Gorgue. Commemorated in Kircubbin Parish Church (Holy Trinity) *and* family grave headstone in the adjoining graveyard. Two of his sisters named their sons after him. James Hawks Stokes and Helen Lyle Stokes (nee Browne) had a son they named William Angus Bartlett Stokes (named after William Angus Browne) and he was killed in the Second World War. Flying Officer (Wireless Operator/Air Gunner) William Angus Bartlett Stokes (No. J/18752) served with 295 (RAF) Squadron in the Royal Canadian Air Force and he was 24 when he died on 11/06/1943. He was buried in Heanton Punchardon (St. Augustine) Churchyard, Devon. John Boyd Iliff and Emily Davidson Iliff (nee Browne) had a son they named William Angus Boyd Iliff (named after William Angus Browne) and he was knighted by the Queen in 1961.

+BUCKLEY, Harold

Royal Air Force. . 53rd Training Squadron. Flight Cadet. Died 17/07/1918. Age 19. He was killed when his training aircraft spun and crashed in the Midlands. Trinity School and Halifax Secondary School. Member of the QUB Training

Corps 15/05/1917. Gibraltar Rd., Halifax. Warley Congregational Cemetery. Halifax Town Books of Remembrance, Halifax Secondary School WM, St Hilda's Church, Halifax WM

+BURKE, Charles

Royal Flying Corps. Wing Commander. Lt.Colonel. DSO, MiD. Royal Irish Regiment, Second battalion, attached to First Battalion East Lancashire Regiment. Burke was killed in action on 09/04/1917, He was the youngest son of Michael Charles Christopher Burke and Amy Burke, of Ballinahone House, Armagh, and husband to Beatrice O. Burke, Stoney Cockbury, Winchcombe, Glos. Point-du-Jour Military Cemetery, Athies, France. Men of Thomond Memorial at St Mary's Cathedral (Church of Ireland), Limerick. See article above.

+BURKE, Robert (Bobbie) John

Royal Air Force. . Aircraftsman (mechanic), Third Class (Service Number 297140). He volunteered for active service in September 1918. He died, aged 19 years, of pneumonia on Wednesday, 10/10/1918 in hospital at Blandford Camp, Dorsetshire, England. Before enlisting he was

employed as a chauffeur by Mr. Samuel R. Henry, Dun Suivnish, Galvally, Portstewart. His parents, Mr. William John (a driver of Portstewart tramway) and Mrs. Susan (nee Law) Burke, lived in the Tramway Depot, Main Street, Portstewart. Portstewart WM, Portstewart PCI WM, PCI - RH, IMR. Agherton Cemetery.

+CAPPER, Bass Durand



Royal Flying Corps. Captain. Died 06/12/1917. Age 29. Died at Coombe Lodge Hospital, Great Warley, Essex, from injuries received while flying

as an observer just a week before. He was educated at King William's College, Isle of Man, and previous to the war was engaged in the firm of B. Capper and Co., Ltd., Belfast.

He was an active member of the Ulster Volunteer Force, and being an expert motorist he volunteered immediately the war broke out, joining the Royal Engineers as a despatch rider, being probably the first man in Ireland to volunteer in this capacity. He went to France on the 26/09/1914, and was attached to General Headquarters under General French. After six months there he was, at his own request, transferred to the 7th Division, with which he saw much active service on nearly all parts of the Western front.

In the summer of 1916 he received a commission in the Royal Flying Corps, and for several months was regularly on duty over the German lines.

In the dining room of the Ulster Reform Club there is a 1912 painting 'The Passing Train' by Lucy Kemp-Welch with dedicatory plaque - Presented by Mr Bass Capper to the Ulster Reform Club in memory of his son Captain Bass Durant Capper Royal Flying Corps 1917. Second

son of Bass and Alice Capper, Lenoxvale,
Belfast. Belfast City Cemetery

+CARSON, Thomas Long

Royal Flying Corps. 4th Squadron. Lieutenant.
Died 31/07/1917. Age 22. Born America. Son of
Daniel Long Carson, Colorado Cottage, Bellisle,
Dervock. No known grave. Arras Flying Services
Memorial. Carnaff Reformed Presbyterian
Church. Ballymoney WM

CLARKE, John Walter

Royal Flying Corps. Lieutenant. Joined up in
Canada. Born 1888, eldest son of Thomas
Clarke and Catherine Boyd, both school
teachers. Aghadowey, Co. Londonderry

+COLLIER, Reginald John

Royal Flying Corps. Second Lieutenant. Died
12/02/1918. Aged 19. Educated at Bangor
Grammar School and Kings Hospital School,
Dublin, he took up a position in the Belfast
Banking Company, working in their Cromac
Street branch. He was also a member of the
Queen's University Training Corps in 1916-1917.
He enlisted in early 1917. He transferred from
the General List to the the Royal Flying Corps

with the rank of Second Lieutenant in August 1917. On 12/02/1918, he was killed in a flying accident while training with 13 Training Squadron at RAF Yatesbury. Born 15/10/1898. Son of William F. Collier and Marion F. Collier (nee Townsend) of Belfast and Bangor. Interred in Bangor Cemetery. St. Comgall's Parish Church, Bangor WM, Queen's University RH.

+COUSINS, Charles Henry

Royal Air Force. Private. 299638. Died 22/10/1918. Age 18. Enlisted in the RAF on 25/09/1918. He was aged 17 and three quarters. He served at the RAF School of Technical Training at Halton, Buckinghamshire, England. Private Cousins died at Central Military Hospital Aylesbury.

He was the only son of Henry and J. Elizabeth Cousins. He was born in Lurgan, County Armagh on 12/12/1900. His father Henry died sometime between 1901 and 1905. His mother remarried around 1905 to William Stewart McClean.

The 1911 census records that the family lived at Roughan, Augher, County Tyrone. Aylesbury Cemetery, Buckinghamshire

CURRAN, Lancelot Ernest

Royal Flying Corps. Major. Also served 1939 - 1945 in the army. Knighted 1964. RBAI and QUB. Barrister. Called to the Irish Bar (King's Inn) 1923. Senior Crown Prosecutor for County Down. Chairman of the Court of Referees and Deputy Umpire under the Unemployment Protection Acts from 1926 to 1945. Queen's Counsel 1943. An Ulster Unionist member. Sat for the Carrick division from the byelection of 19/04/1945 until he resigned on appointment as a Judge of the High Court of Northern Ireland on 03/11/1949. Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Finance (Chief Whip) from 17/07/1945 to 12/06/1947. Attorney-General from 06/06/1947 to 04/11/1949. Judge of the High Court of Northern Ireland from 1949 to 1955. Lord Justice of Appeal in the Supreme Court of Northern Ireland from 1956 to 1975. PC (NI) 1957. Died 20/10/1984. (The murder of his daughter Patricia in 1952 led to a miscarriage of justice which took nearly 50 years to put right)

+CURRIE, Richard

RNAS. Royal Air Force. Renumbered on joining RAF, 241988. Served with 57 Squadron RAF. Brother David, RIR, died of wounds, France

08/10/1918. Son of Richard and Agnes Currie, of Dickson St., Belfast.

+CURRIE, W H

Royal Air Force. 55th Squadron. 2nd Lieutenant. Died 16/07/1918. Local newspaper reports: "Mrs. W. H. Currie, Drumrankin, Cullybackey, has been notified that her husband, 2nd Lieutenant W. H. Currie, Royal Air Force, was killed in action in France on 16th July 1918 in a fight with German aeroplanes. Deceased was a son of the late Mr. William Currie of Clonard Gardens, Belfast and joined the army previous to the outbreak of war. Some time ago he was transferred to the RAF where he gained rapid promotion. His younger brother is a POW in Germany". Charmes Military Cemetery, Vosges, France.

Acknowledgements

Campbell College Register 1894 - 1999
Inst in the Great War web site
Inst and Instonians at War 1914 - 19
QUB Roll of Honour
South African Military History

The Observation Post
Army Flying
Robert Thompson & Lennon Wylie
The Aerodrome
Barry Niblock
Somme Association, Mid Ulster
Kevin Myers
IWM

remembrance ni

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The **remembrance ni** programme is overseen by Very Rev Dr Houston McKelvey OBE, QVRM, TD who served as Chaplain to 102 and 105 Regiments Royal Artillery (TA), as Hon. Chaplain to RNR and as Chaplain to the RBL NI area and

Page 31

the Burma Star Association NI. Dr McKelvey is a Past President of Queen's University Services Club. He may be contacted at houston.mckelvey@btinternet.com

