



remembrance ni

Queen's University in World War 1 - an introduction



Queen's University War Memorial

On the eve of Remembrance Day 2018, The Queen's University of Belfast Services Club will hold its centenary dinner.

In association with this event 'remembrance ni' is collating a Roll of Honour of the staff, students and graduates who served together



HRH The Duke of York, later King George VI, unveils the War Memorial on July 21, 1924. included in the picture are HRH Duchess of York, Major-General, the Reverend JM Simms, DD, Dr Richard Livingstone, Vice-Chancellor, the Marquess of Londonderry, Chancellor, and His Grace, the Duke of Abercorn

with members of the Officer Training Corps. Future issues of remembrance ni will present the accounts as currently collated. Readers are encouraged to forward further names and information.

There is a University Roll of Honour of the names, and services of those who fell. This remembrance ni initiative has attempted to build on that information by researching further details.

The origin, duties and customs of the Queen's University Belfast Services Club

The Queen's University of Belfast Services Club has two fundamental annual duties of remembrance. They are to meet at an annual Eve of Remembrance Dinner and to ensure representation

at an Act of Remembrance at the University War Memorial on Remembrance Day.

The long established custom is that the President of the Club, escorted by a number of Past Presidents and members, attends an Act of Remembrance at the War Memorial the following morning.

The students and staff who returned from the First World War established the Club.

Even in 1916 there had returned to Queen's students who had left their studies to fight for freedom. One of them recorded "Some had suffered grievous wounds, some had taken seriously ill, and some were already medical students sent back by the Government to obtain their qualification because of the shortage of doctors for war or peace.

"They came back to find that the Students' Union had been put to other uses, and they had no resting place. In 1916 returning students approached the Academic Council with a request that a room be allotted to them as a Club Room exclusively for their use." The Secretary of the Academic Council was RM Henry whom it was felt influenced the Council to make the gracious gesture of giving up their own room for this purpose.

The inaugural meeting

The inaugural general meeting of the Queen's University of Belfast Services Club was held on 21st. October 1918. At its foundation the Club comprised students and staff of Queen's University and members of its Officers' Training Corps who had served in the armed forces during World War One. After World War Two,



Queensmen and women who had served in the armed forces, along with members of the OTC and the Air Squadron, were eligible to join the Services Club.

JA Smyth chaired the meeting. It was unanimously decided to form a club, and to call it “The Queen’s University of Belfast Services Club.”

It was also decided to ask the following to hold office:-

President: Colonel T Sinclair

Vice- Presidents: Lt.Colonel Tyrell, Captain JA Sinton, Captain JE McIlwaine, Captain PT Crymble

Chairman: JA Smyth BSc; Hon. Secretary, RI Poston; Asst. Hon Sec. RB Clarke MC; Hon Treasurer S Mcl Bolton; Committee - HC Bell, MH Turnbull, GDF McFadden, WL McRoberts, RB Lindsay, HJC Poore.

“It was decided that all those students of the University who have served in His Majesty’s Forces are eligible for membership; that all graduates and undergraduates of the University and those officers and men attending Extension Course lectures at the University be elected honorary members.”

The simple but unique club customs

The membership of the club and its simple but unique customs were agreed by its founding members who met when they returned after the First World War. Their aim was basic and profound. They



wished to honour and remember the students, graduates, staff of the University and members of its Officers' Training Corps who had been killed or died during the course of the conflict.

Robert Marshall suggested that a dinner should be held on the first and subsequent anniversaries of Armistice Day. In the preparation for the first dinner it was decided that a telegram should be sent to His Majesty the King in these words:

“The Queen’s University Services Club composed of graduates and undergraduates of the University who have had the honour to serve in Your Majesty’s Forces during the war humbly desire to express every sentiment of loyalty and devotion to Your Majesty’s person and throne.”

In each successive year an identical worded telegram has been sent in turn to their Majesties King Edward VIII, King George VI and Queen Elizabeth II, and every year a gracious reply by telegram or letter has been received and read out at the Annual Dinner.

The Toast List for “the first Dinner was very carefully considered, and it was decided that after the Toast of ‘The King’, that of fallen comrades should be proposed by a clergyman who had been a chaplain to the Forces. The third toast was that of the Services to be replied to by representatives of the Royal Navy, the Army and the Royal Air Force, and finally, there was the Toast of ‘Queens’”.

The toast to fallen comrades and the consequent simple but moving rite of remembrance takes place in silence and with lights dimmed.

Following the toast with members and guests remaining standing, in the continuing silence the Book of Remembrance is processed and placed at the top table before the Club President. The silence is broken only by the sounding of the Last Post and Reveille.

Since 1945 when Sir Thomas Houston presented to the Club an ancient pewter bleeding bowl, a collection has been made and the entire amount donated is allocated to the Royal British Legion for its charitable purposes.

The first Annual Dinner was held in Thompson's Restaurant on Tuesday, 11th November, 1919. About 120 persons were present, including distinguished guests. The Toast of 'Fallen Comrades' was proposed by the Reverend Gilbert Patton, who had served as a Chaplain to the Forces, and had been awarded the Military Cross and two Bars.

Robert Marshall recalls, "He spoke slowly with great deliberation and deep sincerity, and every phrase was pointed with affection for those of whom he spoke. His prose became poetry

"I have seen

A Queensman

Leading his own battalion

Over the top.

"I have seen

A Queen's doctor

Attending to the needs

of the broken, the bruised and the bleeding

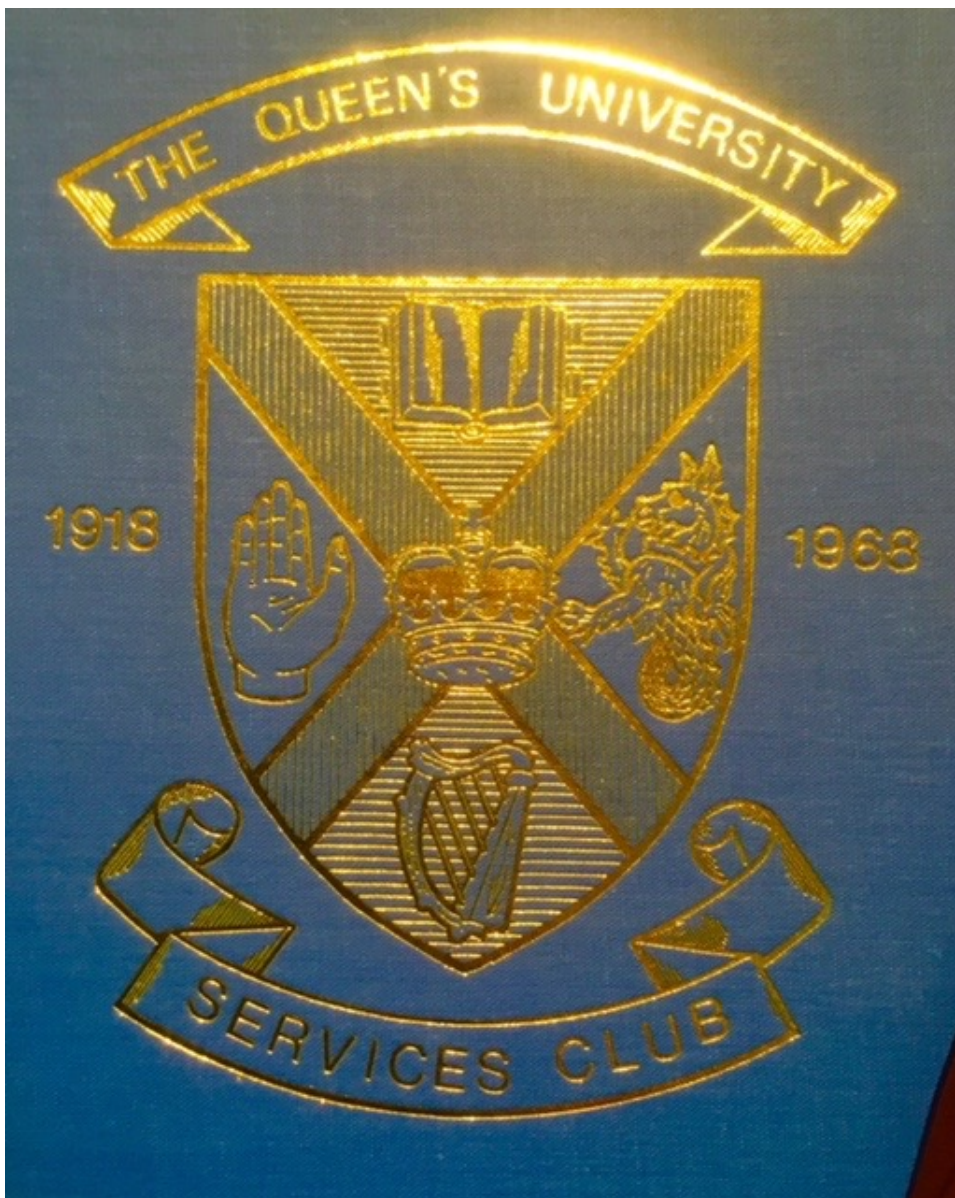
Among such a pitiless hail of shells

That one wondered

That human life could survive."

Mr. Patton's speech was followed by the sounding of the Last Post and Reveillie which "placed a kind of hallmark on our reunion"

Throughout the years this toast has always been proposed by a minister of religion who has been a chaplain to the Forces. Robert Marshall commented, "Every speech was worthy of its purpose, and spoken in emotion and sincerity". As example of their quality he quoted an excerpt from that given by the Reverend Father D M C CSSR, Hon CF.



The front cover of a publication marking the fiftieth anniversary of the QUB Services Club

“Tonight, for us the years are rolled back again. We have left home and the things we love - we are once more marching along the poplar-bordered roads of

Picardy and Flanders. Around us lies the strange panoply of war: a ruined village, a shattered church, splintered trees - blotched with white scars, craters in the fields, shell-shorn trenches, and all that wide desolation which was the Western Front in the First World War. Signposts and names pass before our eyes - Festubert, Albert, Neuve Chapelle, Ypres, Amiens, Arras, Cambrai, the Somme. Mere names these are to passing tourists, but to those among us tonight who marched the roads of Flanders in those blood-flecked years, these are names poignant with memories. They can never be forgotten.

“Nor can those of us whose efforts lay in the battles of the recent war forget the names which have altered our lives for ever - El Alamein, the Burma Road, Anzio, Sicily, the Arne, Falaise, Arnhem.

And equally stirring in memories are the names of Biggin Hill, Cranston, La Platte, Murmansk and the Atlantic convoys.

“I have said a moment ago that these names have altered our lives - this is no empty flourish of rhetoric: for we in these places have lost friends and comrades, and their passing, their sacrifice, has made our lives the poorer. When you have lost comrades who have died for your sake and for the sake of all you hold dear, your pride in their chivalry is mingled with profound sorrow at their loss.

“Their blood has purchased for us the things of life - the quiet fire-side, the sunlit fields, the laughter of children, the busy wheel of commerce, the freedom of deep waters and the open highways of the air, these are ours to-day because of our comrades’ sacrifice. We shall remain for ever their insolvent debtors.

“We can best honour their memory by cherishing the ideas for which they died. They have handed on the torch to us. May we never fail them. What they held dear we shall hold dear.

“Tonight when our thoughts go out to the scattered battlefields where their earthly remains lie at rest we unite in honouring them and in recalling their achievements and sacrifice with pride. And we now declare that our warm affection for them will never lessen - nor will the values for which they died be ever filched from us, cost it even our blood. The torch which they have given to us must never be quenched.”

No dinners were held from 1939 to 1944, but to maintain continuity, a simple lunch was held in the Grand Central Hotel, when after the Loyal Toast, the Toast of Fallen Comrades was proposed by the President and solemnly honoured. In 1945 Dinners were resumed, and the Club’s membership was augmented by Queensmen who had been on active service in the 1939-45 war. In 1947 no dinner was held for the unprecedented reason that the Government had asked that no Dinners of more than 100 persons should be held because of the rationing situation. There was instead, a smoking concert in the OTC Drill Hall, at which the President, Brigadier JA Sinton VC, took the chair.

The foundation of the Queen's University Officers Training Corps

The Queen's University contingent of the Officers Training Corps was created, along with corps in twenty three other universities in Britain, as a result of the Haldane Reforms of the Army. In 1906 Lord Haldane, the Secretary of State for War, decided to address the problem of the shortage of trained officers in the army. He set up a Committee in 1907 and it recommended that an Officer Training Corps be formed, a senior division to be based in universities and a junior division to be based in schools. The Officer Training Corps were established by Royal Warrant in April 1908 and the Queen's University Officer Training Corps was formed on 21st. August 1908.

In April 1910 in an effort to provide more facilities for the Officer Training Corps the Senate of Queen's University decided to set up an advisory committee of military instruction and it also approved the building of a Drill Hall on university grounds for the Corps. The Drill Hall was formally opened on 20 November 1912 by Brigadier-General Count Gleichen, the officer commanding the troops in Belfast.

The Queen's University War Memorial

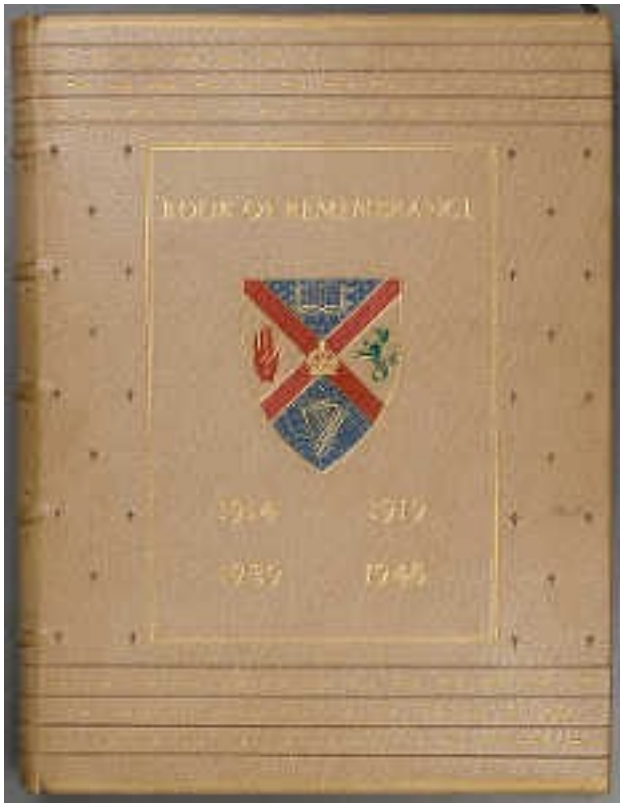
The memorial features a statue of the winged goddess Victory sustaining a fallen soldier. Sir Thomas Brock designed the bronze sculpture, and after his death, Arnold Wright oversaw it's completion.

It was first dedicated on 21st July 1924 in memory of those who died in The Great War. The Duke of York – later King George VI – accompanied by the Duchess of York were the guests of honour at the ceremony.

In 1947 it was decided that the names of those members of the University who had died in conflict during World War Two should also be inscribed on bronze tablets to be placed on the plinth of the War Memorial.

The memorial was rededicated on the 8th November 1950. It now serves to remember the fallen of The Great War and Second World War. Field-Marshal Viscount Alanbrook, the Chancellor of the University, was the guest of honour at this second ceremony.

The Book of Remembrance



As early as October 1914 the Standing Committee of the University Senate, which is the governing body of the University, was recommending that a Roll of Honour be formed of those members of the University who were serving in the War. There were two Rolls of Honours published, one in 1915 and one in 1916 and these were included in the University Calendars for the academic years 1914-1915 and 1915-1916.

In a meeting of the University Senate on 14th. February, 1917 the Reverend Thomas Hamilton, the Vice-Chancellor of Queen's, submitted a list of those men who had been members of the Queen's Officer Training Corps and who had been awarded military honours for, 'services rendered to the country in connection with the War.'

Subsequently the Services Club and the University Senate, felt that a Book of Remembrance containing the names of those who died in conflict in both World Wars should be compiled.

Within the book are the names, ranks, units, and dates of death of each man and woman. The book also lists whether they were members of the University, the Officers' Training Corps or Air Squadron.

The front cover bears the University's coat of arms in gold over inlaid, coloured leather. There are also sketches of the west front of the building and the cloisters as viewed from The Quad.

The Queen's University Services Club now own the Book of Remembrance. Vice Chancellor Dr Eric Ashby accepted its presentation on behalf of the University. The book has been on display in the public library since its presentation on the 4th December 1952. It can also be viewed online.

Miss Dorothy Hutton inscribed the ninety-page vellum book in the early 1950s. Miss Vera Law added gilding before Mr SM Cockerell bound the volume in a dyed, stone-coloured morocco.

Following the dedication of the Book of Remembrance the simple ritual at the Club's Remembrance dinner was altered. Since then, after the Loyal Toast and the Sovereign's reply to the Club's message has been read, the lights are dimmed and a designated senior member leaves his place at table, goes to the foyer of the Sir William Whitla Hall, where he receives the Book from the hands of the Steward of the University. Returning, with all present standing, he places the Book, open, before the Chaplain, who is about to propose the Toast of Fallen Comrades. After this has been honoured in silence, and the buglers have sounded their calls, the member closes the Book, and slowly and decorously takes it out to the Steward, who returns it to the Library. The lights go up again, and the Club's own communal remembrance is over for another year.

This is a moving ceremony. There is no record of another university in the Commonwealth having a similar occasion. It is also pertinent to recall that in neither of the wars was there conscription in

Ireland, and that all who are remembered and honoured gave their services without compulsion.

On 4th December, 1952, Doctor Eric Ashby, Vice - Chancellor, accepted the Book on behalf of the University. The text of his speech is as follows:

“On behalf of my fellow members of the Queen’s University, I accept this Book for safe keeping. It will lie open to be seen by generations of students and teachers; its pages will be turned as long as our walls stand and our society endures. It will rest for the present in the Library. Senior scholars, who vividly remember the price of victory, and young students, for whom the war is only a story told them by their parents, will pass this Book every day.

“The men whose names are written in it left their families and their work so that freedom might be preserved. To each of them freedom meant something different. To one it was intellectual adventure undeterred by the constraints of totalitarian rule. To another it was freedom to plough his own field and to fold his own sheep. To another it was the undisturbed enjoyment of home and children and the garden. To another it was the liberty to speak his mind and put his vote. To another it was simply freedom from foreign domination. By their sacrifice the men whose names are in this book, together with their comrades whose names are on other memorials, have bequeathed to us all these freedoms.

“A university is a society especially entrusted with the safekeeping of one of these freedoms: the freedom to think and to follow through wherever it leads. It is one of our privileges at Queen’s to protect this freedom in this Province. We are happy to live in a kingdom which respects it: for this we are grateful and we offer to the Queen and her ministers our loyal service in preserving it.

“In a few minutes this Book will be installed in the busy traffic of the University Library. Let us hope that students and teachers will sometimes pause to look at it there, and to remember at what cost our liberties have been upheld. For these names touch all of us. ‘Any man’s death diminishes me,” wrote John Donne, “because I am involve in mankind.’ ”

Presidents of the QUB Services Club

1918 - 1958

- 1918, 19, 20 Colonel T. Sinclair CB, MD, FRCS
- 1921, 22 Colonel A. Fullerton CB, CMG, MD, FRCS (I)
- 1923, 24 Major W. J. Wilson, BA, MD, DSc, DPH
- 1925, 26 Major J. S. Morrow OBE, MD
- 1927, 28 Major J. D. M. McCallum CBE, DSO
- 1929, 30 Major Sir Thomas Houston OBE, MD
- 1931, 32 Major R. McCreary MC, BA, BSc, MInstCE
- 1933, 34 Major G. G. Lyttle MB, FRCS
- 1935, 36 The Very Reverend J. G. Paton MC, MA, DD, CF
- 1937, 38 Dr J. A. Smyth BSc, DPH
- 1939, 40 Dr R. M. Beath, BA, BS, FFR
- 1941, 42, 43 Dr Robert Marshall FRCP, DPH
- 1944, 45 Major J. S. Secker BSc
- 1946 Dr S. M. Bolton DPH
- 1947 Brigadier J. A. Sinton VC, OBE, MD, DSc, DPH, FRS
- 1948 Major General Brooke Purdon DSO, OBE, MC, MB
- 1949 Air Vice Marshal Sir William Tyrrell KBE, DSO, MC, MB, LLD
- 1950 General Sir James Steele GCB, KBE, DSO, MC, LLD, ADC
- 1951 Dr Ivan H. McCaw
- 1952 Dr J. A. L. Johnston
- 1953 Lieutenant Colonel T. H. Crozier MD, BSc, FRCP
- 1954 Brigadier Ian Fraser DSO, OBE, MD, MCh, FRCS
- 1955 Mr J. B. O'Neill
- 1956 Lieutenant Colonel J. T. Lewiste MD, FRCP
- 1957 Dr J. M. Hunter
- 1958 Surgeon Captain Kirk Forsythe VRD, MD, RNVR (Retd)

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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 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

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