



remembrance ni



The Foyle Flyers

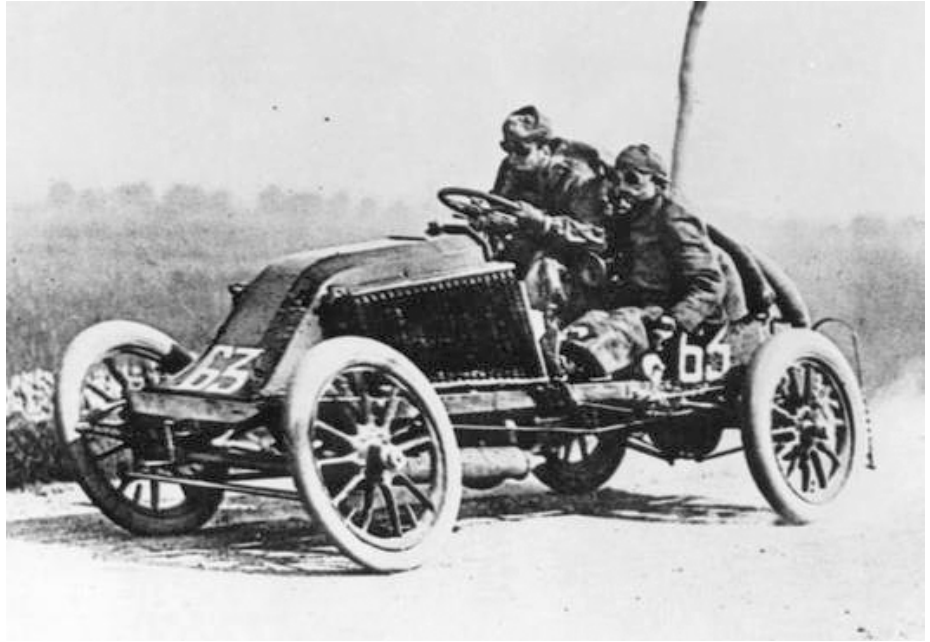
In World War 1 a total of four hundred and ninety Old Boys of Foyle College, Londonderry, would answer the call to arms. Seventy two of their number would not return.

Amongst those who served were the Foyle Flyers, young men who were at the cutting edge of aviation in their time. Their involvement in this was often at a heavy price as the school war memorial and other memorials testify to.

From motor sport to flying

**Leslie Vernon
Lusington
Porter** was

born on
12/05/1881 at
Cullion in
County
Londonderry.
He was a son
of Captain
David Leslie
Porter (Royal



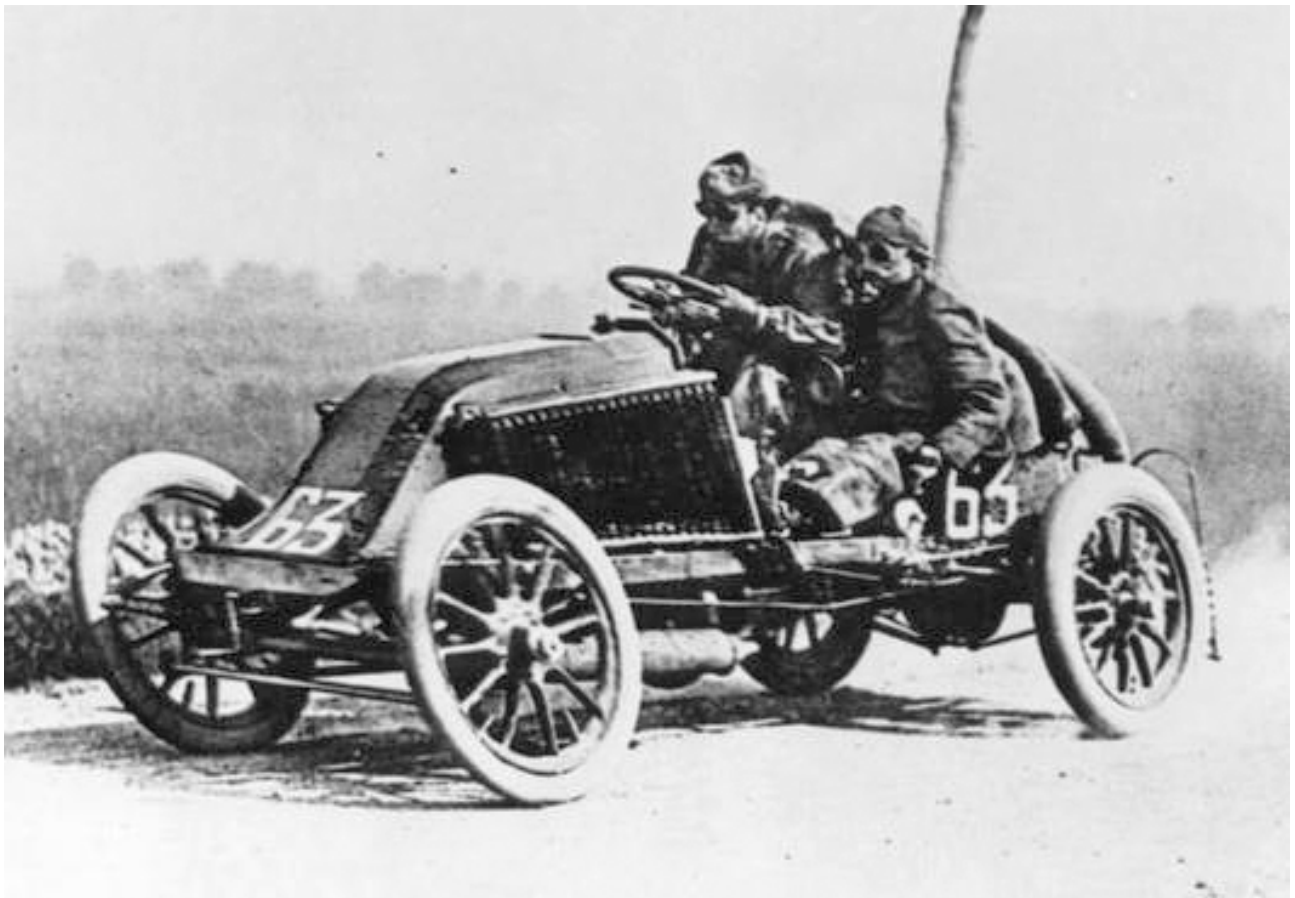
Army Medical Corps) and Caroline Elizabeth Porter (nee Hamilton) who were married on 20 May 1879 in Glendermott Presbyterian Church Londonderry. They had three children: Henry (born 19 February 1880), Leslie (born 12 May 1881) and William (born 1 May 1882)

Leslie Porter was just four years old when his father died in Egypt on 21 June 1885. Captain Porter had taken part in the expedition to relieve General Gordon at Khartoum.

Leslie Porter moved from Cullion to King's Road in Belfast and, with George Coombe, he founded the *Northern Motor Company* in 1899. Later he founded his own firm, *Leslie Porter Ltd, Automobile Engineers and Agents*.



Leslie Porter gained the reputation of being one of the most skilful motorists in Ireland and he was a prominent figure in motoring circles. He drove a Wolseley car in the 1903 Paris to Madrid motor race and his passenger Willie Nixon died when the car crashed. Leslie Porter stayed out of motorsport for a period thereafter and then in 1908 he drove a Calthorpe to fourth place in the Tourist Trophy race in the Isle of Man.



In 1911 while demonstrating a Daimler to Herbert Brown at

his home at *Tordeevra*, Helens Bay, Leslie met Herbert's daughter Kathleen (known as *K*) and on 20/12/1911 they were married in Glencraig Parish Church of Ireland Church.

The couple bought Ballywooley Farm at Carnalea and they had three children: David (born 16/04/1913), Leslie and Margaret.

In May 1915 Kathleen bought an aeroplane flight for Leslie as a birthday gift and he decided to learn to fly. He graduated on 14 November 1915 and joined the Royal Flying Corps on 22 November. He was promoted Flight Commander on 01/05/1916 and he trained as a flying instructor. In the first week of September 1916 while based at Sedgeford in Norfolk Captain Leslie Porter was granted a period of home leave before being sent to the Front. He flew home to Carnalea in his bi-plane and during his stay he performed several spectacular flying displays over Belfast and Bangor. His daring stunts attracted big crowds and, on several occasions, he 'looped the loop'. At the end of this period of home leave he flew back to Norfolk and the 380-mile flight from Carnalea to Norfolk, via Newcastle-upon-Tyne, took 3 hours 27 minutes.

In October 1916, 45th Squadron went to France and on 22 October Captain Leslie Porter led a small group of Sopwith 1½ Strutter aircraft behind enemy lines. His plane did not return. The first message from the War Office intimated that Captain Porter was missing and at the beginning his family harboured hope that he was being held as a Prisoner-of-War.

Leslie Porter's family sought help from several people in high places to try to ascertain his fate. Following

representations made by the Crown Princess of Sweden, who was a daughter of the Duke of Connaught, the American Ambassador in Berlin made enquiries. He was informed by the German authorities that Captain Leslie Porter had died on 24/10/1916 and the authorities returned a silver locket that he had been wearing.

Captain Leslie Porter was 35 when he died and he has no known grave. Captain Leslie Porter is commemorated on the Arras Flying Services Memorial in France; in the annals of Helen's Bay Presbyterian Church and Foyle College WM

A Cathedral remembrance

In St Columb's C of I Cathedral in the city there is a distinctive memorial to **Captain Edward George Harvey** of the Duke of Edinburgh's Wiltshire Regiment and the Royal Flying Corps.

Captain Harvey was only eighteen when he enlisted in the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders. He served with them in operations in the Transvaal South Africa, receiving the Queen's Medal with two clasps, and subsequently as a sergeant in India, where he obtained his commission in the Wiltshire Regiment in 1905.

He was, in 1913, seconded for service with the Royal Flying Corps, in which he was, in 1914, promoted flight commander, and subsequently captain in his regiment, to which he returned at the end of that year, and joined its 1st Battalion at the Front in February 1915. He was at the head of his company leading an attack on the third line of German trenches on June 16, 1915, when he was mortally



The memorial to Edward Harvey bears the crests of the Wiltshire Regiment and the RFC

wounded. A brother, William Francis Harvey, served in the Great War with the Canadian forces, but died afterwards at Victoria, British Columbia, on March 25, 1922, aged 28.

Edward was the eldest son of James George Morewood and Nora Elizabeth (nee Rogan, who died on October 16, 1941, aged 83) Harvey, Creglorne, Londonderry. Brother of Mr James M. Harvey, Londonderry. Nephew of the Reverend Canon John S. and Bessie McClintock, 8, Crawford Square, Londonderry.

At the sitting of Lifford Quarter Sessions Court, held on Tuesday, June 22, 1915, his Honour Judge Cooke, K.C.,



said it was only fitting that he should express deep sympathy with Mr J. G. M. Harvey on the death in Flanders of his son, Edward George Harvey, announced in the papers that morning. The deceased officer's father was constantly represented in that court, and although resident in the city of Derry,

was intimately connected with the county of Donegal as a grand juror.

Mr J. G. M. Harvey, who was the youngest son of Captain Harvey, R.N., The Warren, Culdaff, belonged to an old and highly esteemed Donegal family. He was a cousin of John Harvey, of Malin Hall, and the family were granted estates and settled in the Malin district about the year 1618. J. G. M. Harvey was directly descended from John Harvey, who was Chamberlain of Derry, and who commanded a company of volunteers during the Siege of 1689.

J. G. M. Harvey founded an estate business in Londonderry, and was one of the leading estate agents in Ulster, managing large numbers of extensive properties in Donegal, Londonderry, and Tyrone. He was actively involved in Unionist politics, taking a prominent part in election campaigns in Londonderry from the time of the candidature of Sir John Ross, Ireland's last Lord Chancellor. His services, however, were more freely given as an organiser than as a speaker, for he preferred to do his work in a quiet way. During most of that period he was a member of the Londonderry Unionist Council, and for over twenty years a member of the Ulster Unionist Council, where his views and advice were greatly valued.

J. G. M. Harvey married Nora Elizabeth Rogan, a daughter of Dr William Rogan, M.D., resident medical superintendent of Londonderry and Donegal Asylum, on August 24, 1875. He was a devoted member of St Columb's (Church of Ireland) Cathedral, Londonderry, where he served on the select vestry for many years. He was also for a long period a member of the Derry and Raphoe Diocesan Council. He liberally gave to charities, but in an unostentatious manner, so that the public had little knowledge of the extent of his philanthropy.

J. G. M. Harvey, who was the last survivor of a family of three sons and four daughters, died, in his eighty-second year, at his residence, Creglorne, Londonderry, on Sunday, October 14, 1934.

The name of Captain Edward George Harvey was read out during a memorial service held in St Columb's (Church of Ireland) Cathedral, Londonderry, on Sunday, August 1, 1915, to commemorate the officers and men of the city of

Derry, who had died during the first year of the Great War. His name was also among a list of Great War dead, associated with Foyle College, Londonderry, read aloud during that College's annual prize giving ceremony, held on Thursday, December 19, 1918.

Hunter of airships and submarines



Lea Dickey DSC and two Bars downed a Zeppelin and sunk a U boat in WW1

Robert Frederick Lea Dickey was born in July 1895, the son of Professor Dickie of M'Crea Magee College, Derry, and was educated at Foyle College, where he excelled on the river and was afterwards 'the brilliant cox of the famous Derry Eight who won the King's Cup at the Cork Regatta in 1912'.

Enlisting in the Royal Naval Air Service in April 1915, he quickly gained appointment as a Petty Officer Mechanic, no doubt on account of his time at Foyle, where 'his interest was always in things scientific and mechanical and he

spent much of his spare time in experimenting' (a letter of recommendation refers).

Selected for pilot training in the summer of 1916, Dickey was appointed to the probationary rank of Flight Sub. Lieutenant and took his aviator's certificate (No. 3950) at RNAS Chingford in December 1916.

Posted to RNAS Felixstowe in early 1917, hub of the famous "Spider's Web", he teamed up as a second pilot to the Canadian Flight Sub. Lieutenant B. D. "Billiken" Hobbs in Curtiss H12 flying boats (a.k.a. large American Seaplanes) and commenced his operational tour with a number of anti-submarine patrols that May.

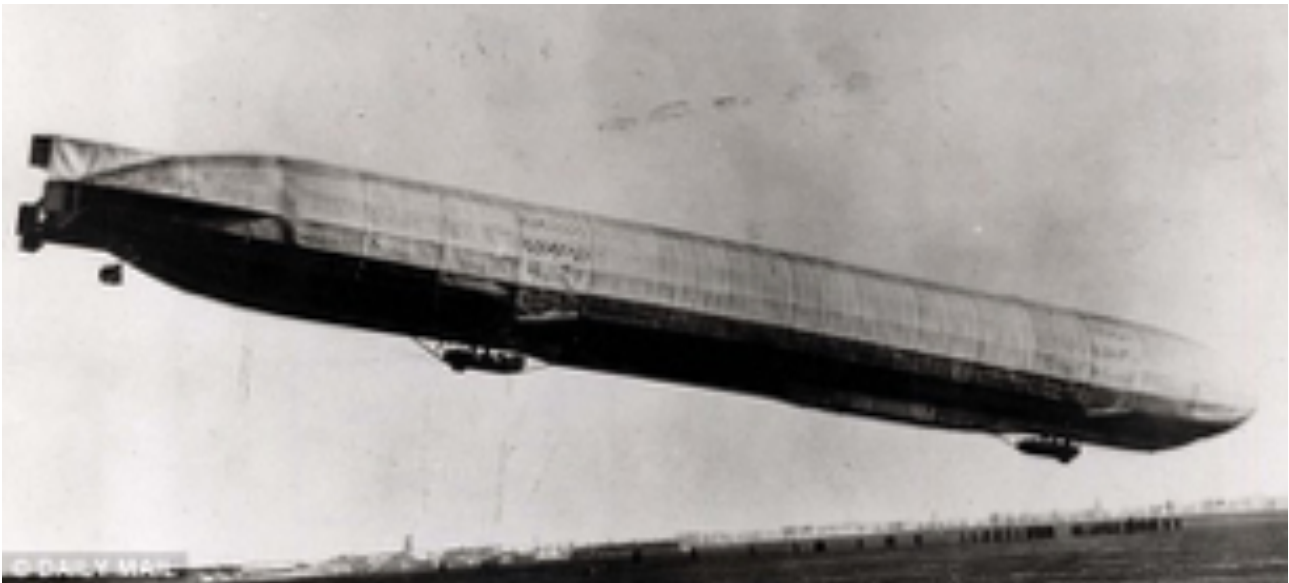
The destruction of Zeppelin L. 43

However, as it transpired, his first successful encounter was in an air-to-air combat fought south-west of Terschilling on 14 June - a spectacular encounter for which he was given full credit as a result of his work on Lewis gun in the front cockpit. W. G. Carr's *Good Hunting* takes up the story:

'Here course was altered, and at half-past seven they were off the Island of Ameland. Now, sweeping in a 20-mile circle, they headed back down the coast homeward bound. The mist was lifting in patches. At half-past eight they were off Vlieland again.

Dickey suddenly saw a Zeppelin.

It was five miles on the starboard beam, at a height of only 1500 feet. "Billiken" [Hobbs] swung the bow of '77 towards



A German Zeppelin pictured leaving for a bombing raid on London during the First World War. The balloons were filled with highly flammable hydrogen. During the war the German military made extensive use of Zeppelins as bombers and scouts, killing over 500 people in bombing raids in Britain. By 1916, Germany was building massive airships of 200 m or so length capable of flying at about 70 mph at altitudes of up to about 13,000 feet while carrying 5 tons of bombs and enough crew to fly the ship, service the engines, patch any gas leaks and man somewhere in the region of 10 machine guns.

the airship. He opened out his engines. He climbed straight for the Zeppelin.

Dickey was at the bow gun, the wireless operator was at the midships gun, and the engineer was at the sternguns. The Zeppelin was barely moving. Her propellers were merely ticking over.

They were now at 2000 feet, 1000 yards away from the airship and above her. The look-out on the Zeppelin saw the flying-boat. The propellers vanished as the engines were speeding up. She moved forward and swung away on a new course. Two men raced to the gun on the tail and the gun amidships on top.

“Billiken” dived on the Zeppelin’s tail at a screaming 140 miles an hour. He passed diagonally across her from starboard to port. When 100 feet above and 200 feet away Dickey got in two bursts from his machine-gun. He used only fifteen cartridges [of Brock and Pomeroy ammunition].

As he cleared the Zeppelin “Billiken” made a sharp right-hand turn and found himself slightly below and heading straight for the enemy. He read her number, *L. 43*. Her immense size staggered him.

Then he saw that she was on fire.

Little spurts of flame stabbed out where the explosive bullets had torn the fabric, and the incendiary bullets had set alight the escaping hydrogen.

Pulling back his controls, he lifted the boat over the airship, and just in time. With a tremendous burst of flame, so hot that all aboard the flying-boat felt the heat, the millions of cubic feet of hydrogen were set off. She broke in half. Each part, burning furiously, fell towards the water.

The top gunner rolled into the flames and vanished.

Three men fell out of the gondalas. Turning over and over they struck the water in advance of the wreckage. The remnants of the Zeppelin fell into the sea, and a heavy pillar of black smoke reared itself to the sky.

The crew of the flying-boat fell on each other’s necks. They were delirious with joy. Everybody crowded into the control cockpit. During the demonstration “Billiken” got the heavy

boat into extraordinary positions. Then “Hell bent for election” he beat it for home.’

News of their great achievement was initially kept secret, but both pilots were duly decorated, Hobbs with the D.S.O.

Another Zeppelin encounter - and several enemy submarines

A day or two later, on 17 June, Hobbs and Dickey won Their Lordships approbation for engaging with ‘great skill and dash’ an enemy seaplane (T.N.A. *ADM 171/85* refers), while on the 28th they carried out their first submarine attack:

‘While preceding convoy and 10 miles S.W. of N. Hinder, sighted enemy submarine. Fired recognition signal and getting no reply we dropped three 100lb. bombs which were observed to fall in line 10 feet apart about 10 feet in front of the periscope’ (his flying log book refers).

Dickey was awarded a Bar to his D.S.C. (T.N.A. *ADM 171/85* refers).

In the following month, on the 12th, Hobbs and Dickey attacked another zeppelin, this time without success:

‘Zeppelin patrol to Texel, north to Terschilling, then east to Borkum. At 10.10 a.m. sighted Zepp. escorting 12 enemy destroyers. Opened out and climbed to 10,000 feet. Zepp. then at 13,000 feet throwing out sand ballast. We climbed to 11,000 but as we had no air controls were unable to get higher. Chased Zepp. at this height till we had to return



The exploding dart was dropped on German Zeppelins by British pilots who leaned over the side of their cockpits

owing to petrol. 16.20 Had engine trouble and landed at 12.45. Completed repairs and got off, landing at Felixstowe at 2.25 p.m.' (his flying log book refers).

Dickey was mentioned in despatches (T.N.A. *ADM 171/85* and *London Gazette* 11 August 1917 refer).

Having then completed around 20 further sorties, Hobbs and Dickey had their next run-in with an enemy submarine on 3 September:

'Patrol around N. Hinder when sighted a hostile submarine which we attacked with one 230lb. bomb. Bomb dropped and exploded within five feet of starboard tail. Second machine then passed over and dropped one 230lb. bomb which fell by port bow. We then passed over again as conning tower was just showing and dropped our second 230lb. which fell in place where conning tower disappeared. When submarine sank we could clearly see two men on top, but though we searched spot for 15 minutes we could not see them. The three bombs fell within a circle of 20



yards diameter. Submarine believed to have been destroyed' (his flying log book refers).

He was mentioned in despatches (T.N.A. *ADM 171/85* and *London Gazette* 19 December 1917 refer).

Followed by yet another encounter ten days later:

'When at N. Hinder sighted conning tower of hostile submarine which was just rising. Submarine saw us at once and started to dive but we fired recognition signal and dropped two 230lb. bombs from a height of 1000 feet. One bomb hit submarine aside conning tower on front side and exploded. Submarine commenced to sink and we circled about and in about two minutes saw a large upheaval in water when air came up in great quantities with oil and wreckage which spread all over vicinity' (his flying log book refers).



Finally, and whatever the outcome of their previous actions, Hobbs and Dickey were officially credited with the destruction of the *UC-6* on 28 September:

‘Before we left we were told hostile submarine was 25-30 miles S. of North Hinder. We went to N. Hinder and set a course S. and when on this course after 20 minutes, the W./T. operator received (indications of) a hostile wireless. These signals got stronger and at 8.30 we sighted a hostile submarine in full buoyancy. We attacked and dropped one 230lb. bomb which got a direct hit on tail. Before bomb hit he fired one shell at us which went 25 feet in front of us and burst above us. We turned to drop the other bomb and saw three more hostile submarines and three destroyers, escorted by two seaplanes. Destroyers and subs all opened fire on us with shrapnel but we managed to drop our second bomb which fell 15 feet in front of the same submarine. Submarine sank with a large hole in tail and made a large upheaval in water. We got a photograph’ (his flying log book refers).

Dickey was awarded a Second Bar to his D.S.C. As verified by his flying log books, he was grounded and placed on the Sick List between October 1917 to March 1918, but he quickly got back into his stride on returning to operations in the latter month - in fact, on 30 April, he shot

down an enemy aircraft in flames. But while employed in an operation off Holland in early June 1918, he was forced down and interned:

‘When on course north-east from Ameland petrol pipes on starboard engine broke in two at carburettor. Landed 2.12 p.m. Started repairs. Thirteen enemy aircraft from Borkum came to the attack. Three shot down by other four machines. At 4.45 our machine had to return and as we could not get off in such heavy sea taxied towards Terschelling fishing boats. Enemy destroyer came out and opened fire on us, shooting off part of wing float, starboard. Enemy aircraft kept diving and firing but Lieutenant Hodgson and A.M. Russell shot one down in flames and another by killing pilot. Enemy destroyer got too close and forced us into Dutch waters. Once there he would not let us out. Arrested on Terschelling at 9.42 p.m. All safe. Destroyed machine.’

Carr’s *Good Hunting* reveals an entertaining tale from Dickey’s time in Holland:

‘While walking in a quiet street of a Dutch town at dusk a huge German elbowed him into the roadway. He seized the coat-tails of the Hun and demanded an apology. The Hun swore in German, not a pretty exhibition. Dickey was small, but he carried a big stick, and when the stick came in contact with the skull of the German the latter fell senseless. Informing the police that a man had been found unconscious in the roadway, the little fire-eater obtained an ambulance and tenderly removed his fallen foe to hospital. Such was Dickey.’

Dickey managed to obtain a passport to the U.K. in August 1918, on account of sickness, and was granted a permanent commission as a Flight Lieutenant in the Royal Air Force in August 1919. He subsequently served at Hinaidi, Iraq, from February 1923 until being placed on half-pay back in the U.K. in January 1924.

Among other posts held between the Wars, Dickey was employed by Sir Sefton Branker and by the Marquis of Londonderry, the latter while serving as Manager of the Municipal Airport at Speke. Called-up on the renewal of hostilities in September 1939, Dickey was appointed a Lieutenant in the R.N.V.R. and posted to Gosport for Boom Defence duties, but of his subsequent services little is known, although he attained the rank of Lieutenant-Commander on the Retired List in March 1941.

Roll of Honour Foyle Flyers

+BRITTON, William Kerr Magill

Royal Flying Corps, 59 Reserve Squadron, Second Lieutenant. Royal Munster Fusiliers. Died 23/05/1917 in Flying Accident at Yatesbury. Aged 25. Son of Margaret H. Hill (formerly Britton), of Hazelwood, Strabane, and the late John Britton, M.D., F.R.C.S. (E.). Strabane Cemetery, Co.Tyrone

DICKEY, Robert Frederick Lea

RNVR. RNAS. Flight Sub-Lieutenant. F4076. RAF. DSC and 2 Bars. Mentioned in Despatches twice within six months. His confirmed victories as a second pilot in large America Seaplanes included the Zeppelin L. 43 and the submarine UC-6. Only 10 officers were awarded a Second Award Bar to the DSC in the Great War, seven of them members of the Royal Naval Air Service. Enrolled 19/04/1915 for hostilities. Petty Officer Mechanic in President II to 09/06/1916 when he was promoted to officer. Commissions: Flight Sub. Lieutenant, 24/03/1917; Captain, Royal Air Force, 01/12/1918 and Flight Lieutenant, 02/08/1919. Lieutenant, RNVR, 24/12/1940, Lieutenant-Commander on the Retired List, 14/05/1941. Born Londonderry 29/07/1895. Son of Professor Dickie of M'Crea, Magee College, Derry. Foyle College. ADM 188/568/4076

+ENGLISH, Maurice Graham

RNAS, RFC. Royal Air Force. Lieutenant. Died 16/07/1918. Age 20. Initially served in the RNAS, joining in early 1916. Commissioned as an observer in 1917. After the 01/04/1918 merger of that branch with the Royal Flying Corps. He served as a lieutenant in 202 Squadron of the 61st Wing of the newly-formed RAF. He flew with English flying ace Lieutenant Lionel Arthur Ashfield, as well as Lieutenant N. H. Jenkins in an Airco De Havilland 4 (A7868). Not long before his death, he was wounded while engaged in perilous photographic work over Ostend.

On 16/07/1918, Lieutenant English's Airco De Havilland 4, serial (A7868), was shot down while returning from Bruges by Vizeflugmeister Hans Goerth over the village of Zevekote in West Flanders, Belgium. The twenty-year-old, who had been acting as observer, died in the aerial combat, as did the pilot Lieutenant Ashfield. During World War I, the German flying ace Hans Goerth was credited with seven aerial victories. The downing of English's de Havilland was the third of seven victories for Goerth.

Maurice English was the second son of John Graham English and his wife Ellen "Nellie" Jane English, Marlborough Street, Londonderry. A native of the city, he was born in the second quarter of 1898 and attended Foyle College. He was a member of the First Derry Presbyterian Church. Interred at the Ramscappelle Road Military Cemetery near Nieuwpoort in West Flanders. Diamond WM, Londonderry. First Derry - PCI RH, Foyle College WM.

+HARVEY, Edward George

Wiltshire Regiment. Captain. Died 16/06/1915. eldest son of James George Morewood and Nora Elizabeth (nee Rogan) Harvey, Creglorne, Londonderry. Menim Gate, Ypres, Belgium, Panel 53, Diamond WM Londonderry, St Columb's Cathedral, Foyle College WM.

+McCONNELL, D

Royal Flying Corps. Second Lieutenant. Foyle College WM
There is no reference to him on CWGM database. There is a

Second Lieutenant McConnell, Royal Flying Corps, whose remains are interred at Cite Bonjean Military Cemetery, Armentieres, Nord, France

+O'BRIEN, Humphrey Donatus Stafford

Royal Air Force, 63rd Squadron and 1st Bn. Northamptonshire Regiment. Captain. MC and Bar, Mentioned in Despatches. Died 14/09/1918. Aged 29. Born 1889 at Tixover Hall. Son of Minna A. O'Brien, of St. John's, Fahan, Co. Donegal, and the late Lucius Stafford O'Brien. Born Tixover Hall, Stamford, Rutland. Bagdad (North Gate) War Cemetery, Iraq. Foyle College WM

+PORTER, L

Royal Flying Corps. 45th Squadron. Flt. Commander. Died 22/10/1916. Aged 35. Husband to Kathleen, Ballywooley Farm, Carnalea. Father of David, Leslie and Margaret. Arras Flying Services Memorial, Helen's Bay Presbyterian Church and Foyle College WM

Acknowledgments

Derry Journal
Diamond War Memorial Project
Dix Noonan Webb
Foyle College
James Heasley
Barry Niblock
Northern Scrivener

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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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