



remembrance ni



## The Huts Cemetery

This cemetery takes its name from a line of huts strung along the road from Dickebusch (now Dikkebus) to Brandhoek, West Flanders, Belgium which were used by field ambulances during the 1917 Allied offensive on this front.

Much of the cemetery was filled between July and November 1917 and nearly two thirds of the burials were of gunners from nearby artillery positions several of which were Australian.

The cemetery was closed in April 1918 when the German advance brought the front line very close. The advance was finally halted on the eastern side of the village, following fierce fighting at Dickebusch Lake, on 8 May.

There are now 1,094 Commonwealth burials of the First World War in the cemetery. The cemetery was designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens.

## **Ballymena RAF man prisoner in Colditz**

Alexander Ballentine, a Ballymena man who served in the RAF from 1940 - 47, was held captive for three years at the famous German Air Force prisoner-of-war camp (Stalag Luft III) on which the Great Escape film was based during the Second World War.

Although Alex as he was known, was not involved in the escape bid, he was forced to walk 800 miles to his eventual freedom from Poland back into Germany.

On 11/06/1942, Alex's plane was shot down in the Frisian Islands off the coast of Holland and he was captured by the Germans.

He was held as a POW at Stalag Luft III for three years near Sagan – now Zagan in Poland – 100 miles south-east of Berlin.

His eldest son Paul Ballentine said that during his father's life he rarely spoke of his experiences during this time but a diary he kept when he was eventually freed sheds some light on it.

Alex was liberated on 02/05/1945, by the British 6th Airborne Division and arrived back in Ballymena May 14/05/945. But, explained Paul, it was a long walk to freedom.

"At the end of the Second World War, he eventually had to walk about 800 miles from Poland back into Germany because the Russians were advancing on the Germans."

The father of three, who lived just off the Hollywood Road in Belfast, was the seventh of eight children born to Alexander and Margaret Ballentine on 11/08/1922, in Ballymena.

After joining the RAF as a teenager, Alex was deployed to Bomber Command where he operated as a rear gunner in a Short Stirling aircraft.

Paul Ballentine, who lives in Coleraine said that his father's role was to defend the rear of the aircraft against attack from German fighter planes.

"My father was based in England and the plane he was in bombed Germany and wherever the Germans were," he said.

"The mission that he was on was known as 'mine-laying', whereby the RAF dropped mines into the sea.

Alex left the RAF in 1947 and joined the civil service where he met his wife Audrey.





## **The Huts Cemetery**

Married for 54 years, the couple had three sons – Paul, Ashley, and Mark, – who together produced seven grandchildren.

After working for the Department of Agriculture in Northern Ireland from 1947 to 1982, Alex became chief executive of Seed Potato Promotions NI where he worked until he was 79 years old.

In his youth, he was a founder member of the Wellington Street, Ballymena Boys' Brigade.

He was survived by his wife Audrey and one of his six sisters, Florrie Madden, who was 90 years old..

Alex died on 28/01/2008. His remains were laid to rest in Ballymoney Cemetery.

On Friday, 24/03/1944 the Great Escape attempt from Alexander Ballentine's Stalag Luft III camp began. Unfortunately for the prisoners, the tunnel had come up short.

It had been planned that the tunnel would reach into a nearby forest, but the first man out emerged just short of the tree line. Despite this, 76 men crawled through the tunnel to initial freedom, even though an air raid during which the camp's (and the tunnel's) electric lights were shut off. Out of the 76 men only 3 escaped. 50 men were killed and the rest were captured and sent back.

## On this Day – January 28

### **1914**

Work began on building HMS Caroline in Cammell Laird, Birkenhead. In 1914 HMS Caroline cost £397,000 to build. This would be £290 million today!

### **1915**

Irish Guards Private Thomas Cummings of Tully Muckamore, Co. Antrim and Albert Smythe were both executed on the 28th January 1915 for desertion. A total of 52 Irishmen were executed, 24 of which had resided abroad.

### **1932**

The Japanese attack Shanghai, China, and declare martial law.

## **1940**

King George of Britain announces court will not be held this year due to the war

## **1941**

French General Charles DeGaulle's Free French forces sack south Libya oasis.

Thai bombers hit Sisophon, French Indochina, final combat in Franco-Thai war

## **1942**

Operation Rutter, as named by the Allies, was a loss with a 68% casualty rate. Though playing to Nazi propaganda, the raid was vital in the development of Operation Overlord.

Timoshenko's offensive in the Ukraine slows down after a 60-mile thrust.

German forces recapture Benghazi.

US Navy pilot claims to sink U-boat, radios "Sighted sub—sank same," but no U-boat was sunk, an honest error.

US Eighth Air Force activated in Savannah, Georgia under Brig. Gen. Asa Duncan; originally intended for North Africa but will serve in Britain.

US Naval Magazine at Port Chicago CA established as subcommand of Naval Ammunition Depot at Mare Island.

## **1943**

A transport of 2,000 Jews deported by the Germans from a ghetto in Vawkavysk arrived at Auschwitz. The SS doctors sent 280 men & 79 women to the camp. 1,641 people were murdered in gas chambers.

The whole of the German workforce is mobilized for 'total war'. All men aged 16-65 and women aged 17- 50 to be registered.

Japanese attempt final drive for Port Moresby, New Guinea. US military begins accepting Nisei (Japanese-American) volunteers.

## 1944

To make clear their displeasure about ongoing assistance to the Nazi war effort by Francisco Franco's Spain, the United States and Britain announce a total oil embargo of the country. With Spanish life grinding to a virtual standstill, Franco agrees finally to cease supplying the Germans with critical war materials and to withdraw the last Spanish troops fighting with the Germans in Russia. By May, the embargo is lifted.

The Red Army succeeds in encircling several German divisions in the area of Cherkassy.

Over Anzio, the US 99th Fighter Squadron (Tuskegee Airmen) in 16 P-40s shoots down 4 German Fw 190s—the previous day they shot down 8 Fw 190s.

## 1945

The Ardennes salient is finally eradicated. The first convoy for three years reaches China through Burma. Ledo-Burma Road reopens as first Allied convoy crosses into China; in the ceremony, Chiang Kai-shek renames it the Stilwell Road, in honour of General Joseph Stilwell.





**The Huts Cemetery on a foggy morning**

## **Roll of Honour – January 28**

***Representing their comrades who died on this day***

**1915**

**+CUMMINGS, Thomas**

Irish Guards. 1st Btn. Private. 2222. Died 28/01/1915. Born Muckamore. Had served 1904 - 1912 and was recalled at the beginning of the war. He was executed for desertion, and subsequently pardoned. His battalion commander described him as “an excellent soldier.” Son of William Cummings, of Tully Muckamore, Belfast. Le Touret



Memorial, Pas de Calais, France. Killead Presbyterian Church memorial

**+DEVLIN, John**

Royal Irish Fusiliers, 1st Btn. Corporal. 9261. Died 28/01/1915. Age 28. He was wounded in France on 17/09/1914 losing an eye. He was sent home to Tynan to recuperate. He was admitted to Armagh's Workhouse Hospital having lost his hearing and the sight of his other eye. Despite dedicated nursing he deteriorated and died (Armagh Guardian). He left a wife and child. St Joseph's Roman Catholic Graveyard, Tynan

**1916**

**+BLACK, Robert**

Royal Irish Rifles. Rifleman. 3/10441. Died 28/01/1916. Son of Robert and Ellen Black, of Old Portadown Road, Lurgan. Lurgan Mail: 06/01/1917: Military Funeral in Lurgan - After a long and painful illness, due to gas poisoning at the front, the death took place on Thursday last of ex-Rifleman Robert Black, R.I.R., a son of Mr Robert Black, Old Portadown Road. Deceased who volunteered at the outbreak of war, was first wounded at Hooge, and was subsequently a victim of gas poisoning, afterwards being discharged as unfit. The obsequies, thanks to representations made by Mr David Pedlow, were accorded military honours, a firing party of R.I.F., in charge of Sergeant Quinn, travelling especially from Armagh for the purpose. At the conclusion of the burial service, which was read by the Dean of Dromore, three volleys were fired over the grave, and the ceremony ended

with the sounding of the "Last Post." Shankill Graveyard, Lurgan

### **+DICKY, John**

Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers. Private. 7585. Died 28/01/1916 of sickness in 1<sup>st</sup> Southern General Hospital, Stourbridge, England. Age 28. Born at Ballyclare 17/05/1886. Enlisted Belfast. Son of the late William and Jane (nee Topping) Dickey; husband to Susan Jane Dickey, of 53, Cosgrave St., Belfast. Carnmoney Cemetery. Ballyclare WM

### **+DONNELLY, Thomas**

Royal Irish Rifles, 2nd Btn. Rifleman. 5884. Died 28/01/1916. Age 18. He joined the regiment near the beginning of 1915 and witnessed a lot of heavy fighting, a great deal of which was in the Ypres area including the Heronthage Chateau. Sometime during January 1916, Rifleman Donnelly was severely wounded and conveyed to the Boulogne military hospital by ambulance to be given first aid before being sent to England for his recovery, but unfortunately he deteriorated and died from his wounds. Son of John and Mary Donnelly, of Bendooragh, Ballymoney. Boulogne Eastern Cemetery, France. Ballymoney WM

### **+HALL, James**

Royal Irish Rifles, 2nd Btn. Rifleman. 5090. Died 28/01/1916. Age 29. Son of James and Mary Hall; husband to Sarah Jane Hall, Princes St., Lurgan. Bailleul Communal Cemetery Extension, Nord, France

**+McQUADE, J**

Northumberland Fusiliers, 3rd Btn. Private. 23235. Died 28/01/1916. He is shown to be from Markethill, but no further information can be identified. He enlisted at Newcastle-upon-Tyne, and was discharged after 39 days. He did not serve abroad. His effects were left to his two sisters and two brothers. Byker and Heaton Cemetery, Newcastle-upon-Tyne

**1917**

**+CARSON, Samuel Andrew**

Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers. 1st Btn. Company Serjeant Major. Distinguished Conduct Medal. 6868 Died 28/01/1917. Enlisted Drumagh, Tyrone. Theipval Memorial, France

**+COATES, Matthew**

Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers. 1st Btn. Private. 26276. Died 28/01/1917. From Shankill, Belfast. Theipval Memorial, France

**+DIXON, Arthur**

Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers. 1st Btn. Private. 27780. Died 28/01/1917. Age 23. Son of Mrs. Sarah Dixon, of Connell St., Limavady. Theipval Memorial, France

**+ENGLISH, Bernard Mooney**

Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers. 1st Btn. Private. 29522. Died 28/01/1917. Enlisted Belfast. Born Ballyclare 12/06/1897. Son of David and Elizabeth (nee Mooney) English. His sister

Elizabeth Storey lived at 6 Trainfield St., Belfast. Theipval Memorial, France. Ballyclare WM

**+FETTES, George**

Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers. 1st Btn. Corporal. 9854. Died 28/01/1917. Age 26. Son of Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Fettes, of 8, Almond Terrace, Kirkliston, West Lothian. Enlisted Newry. Theipval Memorial, France

**+FINLAY, William John**

Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers. 1st Btn. C Coy. Private. 18325. Died 28/01/1917. Age 32. Son of Mr. and Mrs. Finlay, of Main St., Sion Mills; husband of M. Finlay, of 67, Bridge St., Strabane, Co. Tyrone. Theipval Memorial, France

**+GLENN, Cecil William**

Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, 1st Btn. Lieutenant. Died 28/01/1917 during an attack in which the 1st Inniskillings and 1st Border Regiment assaulted strong German-held positions south of Le Transloy. Cecil Glenn came from Cookstown. Thiepval Memorial, France. Cookstown War Dead Book

**+GRAY, David**

Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers. 1st Btn. B Coy. Private. 10449. Died 28/01/1917. Age 21. Son of Robert and Mary Gray, of William St., Ballymena. Theipval Memorial, France.

**+HALL, J**

Royal Irish Rifles. 2nd Btn. Rifleman. 5090. Died 28/01/1916. Son of James and Mary Hall, husband to Sarah



Jane Hall, Princes St., Lurgan. Bailleul Communal Cemetery Extension, Nord, France

**+McKENNA, James**

Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers. 1st Btn. Lance Corporal. 10297. Died 28/01/1917. Age 27. Son of James McKenna; husband of Sarah McKenna, of 32, Maria Place, Belfast. Theipval Memorial, France

**+McKEOWN, Hugh**

Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, 1st Btn. Private. 28205. Died 28/01/1917. Taking part in a night patrol lead by Lieutenant Cecil W Glenn (above) when the 1st Battalion attacked enemy positions on 28/01/1917, south Le Transloy. Even though the mission was a success, the battalion lost eighteen men. Hugh McKeown enlisted in Cookstown. Thiepval Memorial, Somme, France.

**+MORGAN, Robert John**

Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, 1st Btn. Sergeant. 9931. Died 28/01/1917. Aged 23. Robert John Morgan was born on 20/04/1893 in Main Street, Bangor. A son of Thomas and Jane Ritchie (nee Boal) who were married on 01/08/1879 in Newtownards C of I Parish Church (St Mark's). They had at least twelve children. The Morgan family lived at 63 Main Street, Bangor. Their mother Jane (Mary) died of heart disease in Main Street, Bangor on 06/01/1907 (aged 43) and their father Thomas married Helena Nixon on 25/09/1907 in St Anne's C of I Church Belfast. Robert Morgan joined the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers around 1911 and was stationed initially in Omagh. Two of his brothers were also on active service during WW1, Frederick in the Royal Navy and James with the Canadian forces. Robert

served at the Front. He was killed in action by shellfire at Amiens on 28/01/1917. Caterpillar Valley Cemetery, Longueval, Somme, France. Bangor and District WM. Royal British Legion (Bangor Branch) Memorial Plaque. Comrades of the Great War (Bangor Branch) Album in North Down Museum. Bangor C of I Parish Church (St Comgall's) RH.

### **+O'HARA, Patrick**

Royal Irish Rifles, 2nd Btn. Rifleman. 9500. Died 28/01/1917. born in the Dungannon area. Patrick enlisted in Newtownards. The 2nd Presbyterian Church in Dungannon lists a Private David O'Hara, killed in action, who served with Royal Rifles. He lived Killyquinn. It is possible that is the same man. Berks Cemetery Extension, Belgium

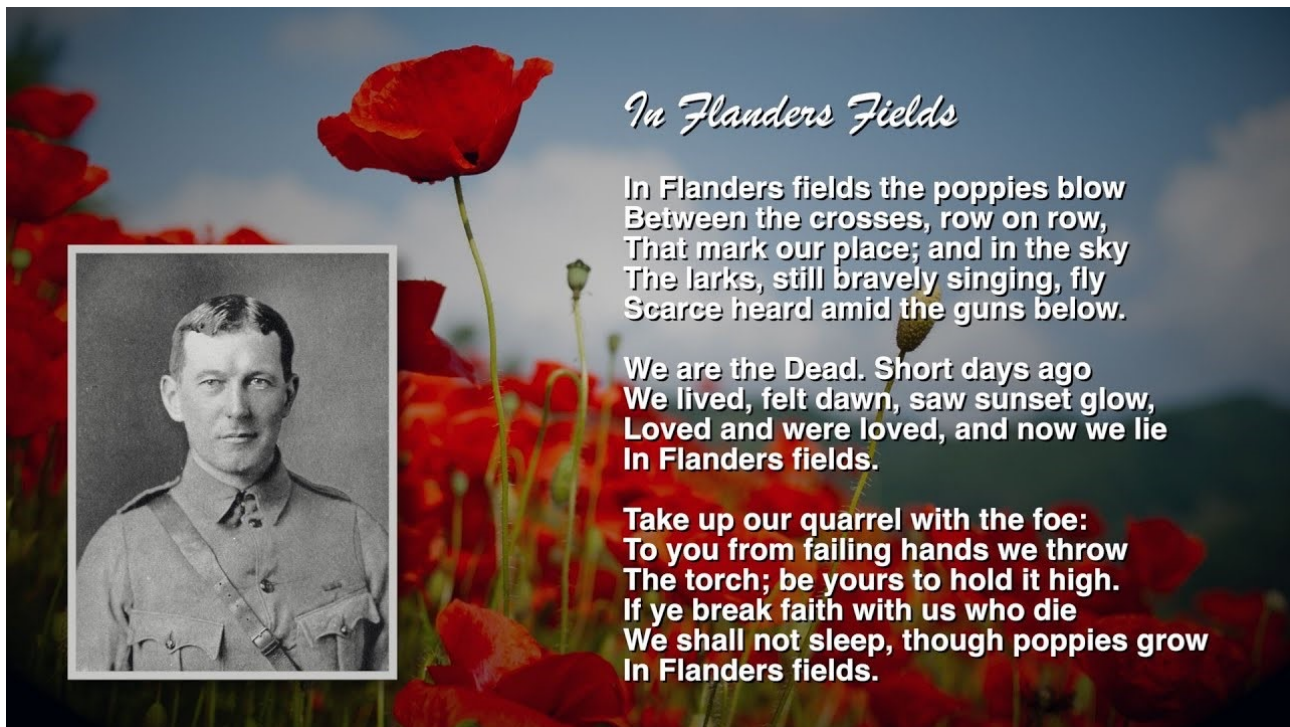
### **+RICHMOND, William James**

Australian Infantry, A.I.F. 34th Btn. Sergeant. 165. Died 28/01/1917. Age 26. According to reports, Sergeant Richmond was killed by shrapnel at Armentieres. Prior to enlisting William was a single 26 year old Farmer from Gunnedah, New South Wales. Born 31/10/1889 at Kilrea. Son of Joseph and Lizzie Richmond, of 10, Triangle Place, Leven, Fifeshire, Scotland. They had lived in Moneygran and then in Tamlaght. Cite Bonjean Military Cemetery, Armentieres, France. Kilrea WM

## **1918**

### **+McCRAE, John**

Canadian Army Medical Corps. Lieutenant Colonel. Died 28/01/1918. Age 45. Son of Col. David McCrae and Janet Simpson Eckford McCrae, of Guelph, Ontario. Wimereux Communal Cemetery, Pas de Calais, France. The



*In Flanders Fields*

In Flanders fields the poppies blow  
Between the crosses, row on row,  
That mark our place; and in the sky  
The larks, still bravely singing, fly  
Scarce heard amid the guns below.

We are the Dead. Short days ago  
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,  
Loved and were loved, and now we lie  
In Flanders fields.

Take up our quarrel with the foe:  
To you from failing hands we throw  
The torch; be yours to hold it high.  
If ye break faith with us who die  
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow  
In Flanders fields.



headstones at Wimeraux are laid on the ground due to the sandy soil.

John McCrae was a Canadian doctor who started to write verse at McGill University. He served as a Lieutenant in the Canadian Field Artillery during the Second Boer War (1899-1902) and he was appointed as the Medical Officer to the 1st Brigade Canadian Field Artillery at the beginning of the First World War. His poem 'In Flanders Fields' first appeared in Punch during December 1915 and became the most famous poem of the War. It was written during the second Battle of Ypres where his friend, Lt Alexis Helmer, was killed. In January 1918 McCrae was appointed consultant to all the British Armies in France, but he died of pneumonia before he could take up the post. A book of his poems was published in 1919. McCrae also wrote a book on pathology.

### **+MONTGOMERY, John**

Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, 1st Btn. Sergeant. 4595.  
Transferred to Machine Gun Corps, 121<sup>st</sup> Company. 29028.  
Died 28/01/1918. Aged 31. He enlisted in Newtownards and served with the 1st Btn. Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers before being transferred to the Machine Gun Corps. Sergeant John Montgomery served in Gallipoli where he was wounded twice before being sent to the Western Front. He was wounded again on 22/01/1918 at Arras and died six days later. It was reported in the Press that he had three brothers on active service. John was born on 19/10/1886 in Conlig. A son of John and Margaret (nee Nelson) Montgomery (nee Nelson) who were married on 22/01/1883 in Great Victoria Street Presbyterian Church Belfast. John was from Ballymacarrett, and Margaret was from Conlig. They had ten children. The Montgomery family lived in Barrows House, Main Road, Conlig. John and Jane Clarke from Movilla



Street, Newtownards, married on 23/02/1914 in Newtownards Registrar's Office and they had a daughter Margaret (born 11/08/1914 in South Street, Newtownards). Mory Abbey Military Cemetery, France. Bangor and District WM. Royal British Legion (Bangor Branch) Memorial Plaque. Comrades of the Great War (Bangor Branch) Album in North Down Museum. Conlig Orange Hall RH. Conlig Presbyterian Church RH

**1947**

**+McGRATH, Liam Henry**

RAFVR. Wing Commander. 63389. Died 28/01/1947. Omagh, (Dublin Road), Cemetery. QUB WM



HM Submarine E14 lost this day in 1918. Commemorated on Portsmouth Naval Memorial

**VETERAN**

## **CRAIG, Charles Curtis**

Captain. Royal Irish Rifles, 11th Battalion. Served with the Ulster Division. He was wounded and a prisoner of war. Chevalier of the Legion of Honour. He died this day in 1960.

Captain Charles Curtis Craig was the fifth son of the late Mr. James Craig J.P., of Craigavon, Strandtown, and Tyrella, County Down, and M.P. for South Antrim. James Craig, of Craigavon, Belfast, was a self-made millionaire whisky distiller, among his brothers was Northern Ireland's first Prime Minister, James Craig.

Charles Curtis Craig was born on 18/02/1869, he was educated at Clifton College, and entered the House of Commons in 1903 as Conservative member for South Antrim, in succession to the Right Honourable Sir W. G. Ellison-Macartney, K.C.M.G., the distinguished Ulsterman, who resigned the seat on his appointment to the position of Deputy Master of the Mint, and who later served as Governor of Tasmania. Captain Craig took a leading part in the anti-Home Rule fight, which was approaching its culmination on the outbreak of WW1.

He was an enthusiastic member of the Ulster Volunteer Force, and was one of the first to respond to the call to the colours, obtaining a captain's commission in the South Antrim Battalion, which was formed entirely in his own constituency, on 14/09/1914. He served with his battalion at Clondeboy, at Seaford, and at Bordon, and accompanied it to the front in October, 1915.

A prominent member of the Ulster Unionist Council, Captain Craig was one of several members of that body serving at

the front who obtained special leave to attend the momentous meetings held in Belfast for the purpose of discussing and coming to a decision on the Home Rule settlement proposals. It was reported he was then looking remarkably well, and spoke in the highest terms of the spirit, and fitness of the men of the Ulster Division.

The London Correspondent of the “Northern Whig” telegraphed that “Colonel James Craig had received a letter from a friend at the front which fully confirmed the tidings previously received of the magnificent keenness and gallantry shown by the Ulster Division in the British advance, the letter, it is pleasant to say, also suggests the possibility of a more hopeful view of the case of Captain Charles Craig. It seems that he was wounded in the knee when the Division had gone far forward, yet continued to direct and encourage his men with as much coolness as if at manoeuvres.

“He refused to withdraw from the fighting line, and it appears to be thought that in the rush of desperate battle he may chance to have fallen alive into the hands of the enemy. It is of course no agreeable fate to be a prisoner of war in Germany, but it leaves the friends of the prisoner with hope that they may see him again.

“Captain Craig, is one of four brothers who volunteered for service at the outbreak of war, the others being Lieutenant Colonel James Craig, M.P., who was Assistant Adjutant and Quartermaster General of the Ulster Division, until his health broke down last year; Major Clarence Craig, of Tyrella, who is serving with the Royal Engineers of the Ulster Division and Lieutenant E. E. Craig, Army Service Corp.

(M.P for Antrim South from 1903); D.L. for Co. Down;; son of the late James Craig, of Craigavon, Belfast; b. 1869; m. 1897, Lilian Bowring, daughter. of the late John Wimble, of Long Ditton, Surrey.

# Every day is a Remembrance Day

***We will remember them***

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**Information about individuals who served - please forward to remembrance ni at email below**



# 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 the Burma Star Association NI. Dr McKelvey is a Past President of Queen's University Services Club. He may be contacted at [houstonmckelvey@mac.com](mailto:houstonmckelvey@mac.com)

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**Please forward** - information about those who served - names, regiment, ship or unit, date of death to [houstonmckelvey@mac.com](mailto:houstonmckelvey@mac.com)

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