



remembrance ni



Goat Major Fusilier Matthew Owen of 1st Battalion The Royal Welsh with Llywelyn, the regimental goat. Queen Victoria presented the first official goat in 1844.

NI Canadian soldier at Voormezeele Enclosures Cemetery

Voormezeele Enclosures Nos. 3 is located 4 Kms south-west of Ypres and contains 1,613 WW1 burials. The



Voormezeele Enclosures were originally regimental groups of graves, begun very early in the First World War.

The Voormizeele Enclosures (at one time there were a total of four, but now reduced to three) were originally regimental groups of graves, begun very early in the First World War and gradually increased until the village and the cemeteries were captured by the Germans after very heavy fighting on 29 April 1918.

Voormezeele Enclosure No.3, the largest of these burial grounds, was begun by the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry in February 1915. Other plots were made after the Armistice when graves were brought in from isolated sites and smaller cemeteries to replace the French graves (of April and September 1918) that were removed to a French cemetery.



These concentrated graves cover the months from January 1915 to October 1918, and they include those of many men of the 15th Hampshires and other units who recaptured this ground early in September 1918.

There are now 1,611 Commonwealth servicemen of the First World War buried or commemorated in Voormezele Enclosure No.3. 609 of the burials are unidentified but there are special memorials to 15 casualties known or believed to be buried among them.

There are now 593 Commonwealth servicemen of the First World War buried or commemorated in this cemetery. 40 of the burials are unidentified and 14 graves destroyed by shell fire are represented by special memorials. Other special memorials record the names of two casualties buried in Enclosure No.4 whose graves were also destroyed. The cemetery also contains 6 German war graves.



The cemetery was designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens.

Among those buried here is Enniskillen born 121 Private **John Bleakley**,

a Private in Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry (Eastern Ontario Regiment). Son of George and Alettica Bleakley, of Enniskillen. John had 12 years service with the Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry when he emigrated to Canada in 1912. He enlisted on August 24, 1914 in Princess Patricia Canadian Light Infantry. Private John Bleakley 121, sailed for England from Canada on "S.S. Royal George" on October 4, 1914 moving on to France from England January 15, 1915. He was killed in action on 31/01/1915 at St. Eloi

On this Day – January 4

1915

Belfast Newsletter

THE ULSTER DIVISION.

The New Pioneer Battalion.

ADDITIONAL ENGINEER COMPANY TO BE FORMED..

In order to provide men to replace those discharged for various reasons it has been decided to increase the establishment of each battalion in the Ulster Division by 50 privates, bringing the total up to 1,150, including officers. The 16th Battalion Royal Irish Rifles (2nd County Down Battalion), which is in course of formation at Brownlow House, Lurgan, will become the new Pioneer Battalion of the Ulster. Division, with an establishment of 1,139.

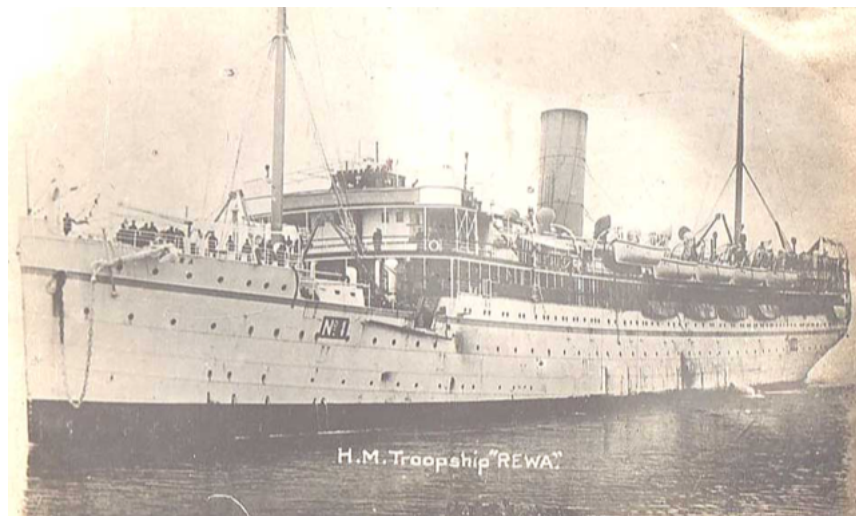
Lieutenant-Colonel Charles Gilbert Carnegie, M.V.O., was recently appointed commanding officer of the new unit, the present strength of the battalions is about 700 men. The establishment of the various trades in the Royal Engineers' branch is based on the requirements of the War Office at the time the return was made up, but it is understood that the Division has just been ordered to form an additional field company of Royal Engineers, and to increase the strength of the existing field companies (121st and 122nd) by 75 men each, making each company 305 strong.

The new company is also to consist of 305 men, and the 36th Divisional Signal Company establishment is to be raised to a strength of 202 men, an increase of 21. this means that close on 476 additional men for the Engineers will be needed. The additional number required will involve a total increase for the Division of nearly 1,000 men, bringing the establishment up to 17,991. Eight non-commissioned officers and men from each battalion in the Division will attend a course of instruction in transport work in Carlton House, Ormeau Road, commencing on the 6th inst., and continuing for fourteen days.

1916

Two Belfast Battalions, the 10th (South Belfast) and the 15th (North Belfast) Battalion Royal Irish Rifles are in the trenches, under the command of the 4th Division. They hold the trenches respectively on the Redan Ridge and facing Beaumont Hamel

1918



HMHS Rewa, sailed from Malta bound for Cardiff carrying 279 persons including walking wounded, was hit and sunk off Hartland Point by a torpedo from U-55. Wilhelm Werner U-55, lined her up, and sank her by torpedoes in the Bristol Channel. The ship took around 2 hours to sink, allowing all 279 wounded and ship's crew to board lifeboats except for the 4 engine men who died in the initial explosion. very lucky to get away with such light casualties

1920

The Reverend Pierce Martin unveiled the memorial tablet for Balmoral Methodist Church (Osborne Park) during a service conducted by the Reverend Finlay Maguire.

1940

The 16th Australian Brigade marches through the streets of Sydney.

Britain requisitions all merchant ships for war effort.

1941

Free French lead Tuareg and Tibesti tribesmen from Chad to destroy Italian air base at Murzuk, Libya, having crossed 468km of desert.

German-born singer-actress Marlene Dietrich becomes US citizen.

1942

The Red Army captures Kaluga to the southwest of Moscow.

Chiang Kai-shek is appointed as Supreme allied commander in China.

Japanese begin pre-invasion air attacks on the major British naval and air base of Rabaul in the Bismarcks in the South Pacific.

1943

HM Submarine P311 was lost on or around this date off Maddalena, Sardinia, possibly after striking an Italian mine. She was lost with all hands (71 men). Her wreck was discovered in 2016.

The Japanese Navy orders the evacuation of Guadalcanal by the end of the month.

Polish resistance attacks Germans in Czestochowa but fail, 251 killed.

Earl Warren inaugurated for first of three terms as California governor, but declines to have ceremony due to war.

1944

The Germans announce the mobilization of school children for war work.

Church authorities at the Abbey of Monte Cassino give Luftwaffe permission to remove artwork to Germany.

Fascist northern Italy seizes Jewish assets and forbids Jews from owning land or stock.

The Soviet 27th Army took Bila Tserkva southwest of Kiev.

The Soviet 1st Ukrainian Front pushed Erich von Manstein's Army Group South back beyond the pre-war Polish border at Sarny.

The U.S. Fifth Army attacked the southern end of the Gustav Line along a 10-mile front.

1945

The USA issues its casualty figures to 21/12/1944 as 135,323 killed, 362,824 wounded, 75,844 missing and 64,148 captured.

In Burma, British secure Akyab Island; Burma is now secured from Akyab to Mandalay, and north of the Irrawaddy River.

The American escort carrier USS Ommaney Bay was severely damaged in the Sulu Sea by a

Japanese kamikaze attack. The ship was abandoned and then scuttled by a torpedo from the destroyer USS Burns.

Roll of Honour – January 4

Representing their comrades who died on this day

1915

+BLEAKLEY, John

Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry (Eastern Ontario Regiment). Private. Killed in action on 31/01/1915 at St.Eloi. John had 12 years service with the Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry when he emigrated to Canada in 1912. He enlisted on 24/08/1914 in Princess Patricia Canadian Light Infantry. Private John Bleakley 121, sailed for England from Canada on "S.S. Royal George" on 04/10/1914 moving on to France from England 15/01/1915. Son of George and Alettica Bleakley, of Enniskillen.

+O'HANLON, S

Royal Irish Rifles. Recorded in CWGC as Royal Irish Regiment, 1st Btn. Lance Corporal. 8726. Died 04/01/1915. Born Portadown. Lawrence, Mass/, USA. Estaires Communal Cemetery and Extension, France

+WILSON, William

Royal Irish Rifles, 5th Btn. Rifleman. 5433. Died 04/01/1915. Age 18. Son of Isaac Wilson. Belfast City Cemetery

1916

+CAIRNS, George Ritchie

Royal Field Artillery, 52nd Div. Ammunition Col., Second Lieutenant. Died 04/01/1916. Age 20. Born in Partick, Glasgow, in 1894, the youngest son of James Cairns, a police constable (later police inspector) and his wife Mary Cairns nee McKeown, who came from Belfast. He was educated at Hillhead High School and Glasgow University, where he graduated prior to enlisting shortly after the outbreak of war. A keen athlete he won several prizes for running and was captain of the school's Rugby football team. It was his intention on leaving school to enter the legal profession and was to have entered the office of the Town Clerk on the day he was gazetted. Lancashire Landing Cemetery, Gallipoli. Family memorial in Bangor cemetery, Co. Down

1917

+FREEBURN, J

Royal Irish Rifles. 5th Btn. 4218. Died 04/01/1917. Age 28 years old. Son of John and Elizabeth Freeburn, of 4, Red Row, Laurencetown, Co. Down. All Saints C of I Churchyard, Tullylish

1918

+DOUGHERTY, Joseph

Canadian Expeditionary Force. Sapper. 545. Died 04/01/1918 in a UK hospital. as a result of injuries received in battle. Born on 28/09/1883, to William and Jane, nee' Thompson, at their home at Upper Tully, near Newbuildings, County Londonderry. In his early years he had worked as a general farm labourer around local farms. It is possible that his work would have included time on one of the four railway yards around Londonderry at that time.

Joseph emigrated to Canada a short time before war was declared on 04/08/1914. He left his wife and four children behind, presumably intending to settle in employment before they would join him. Joseph and Lizzie, (Elizabeth nee Rodden), his wife, lived at Bready Post Office, then at Tamnakeery, Bready. Elizabeth may possibly have been the Postmistress. They married in Ebrington Presbyterian Church on 09/08/1904. The children were William, Jeanie, David, and Annie. They were, respectively, 12, 10, 8, and almost seven when their father died.

Sapper Joseph Dougherty enlisted in the Canadian Expeditionary Force at Toronto on 03/05/1915. He is described as 6ft tall, of good health and physique, with blue eyes and brown hair. He received the necessary inoculations and vaccinations in a matter of days and was posted to a unit of the Canadian Overseas Railway Construction Corps. (This suggests some knowledge of railway working). He departed Canada by troopship on 14/06/1915 and arrived in England on 25/06/1915. His unit immediately began intensive training for their role as railway engineers and construction workers.

Joseph seems to have been an average soldier of the time. In March 1916 he received 28 days Field Punishment for being drunk at 5.30 pm, and also spent a few days in hospital having treatment for haemorrhoids. Otherwise he appears to have been fit and healthy

In late October 1917 Joseph received a gunshot wound to the left leg while working near Hazebrouk, causing a severe fracture of the Tibia. He was evacuated through 53 Canadian Casualty Station and 63 Field Ambulance, and eventually on 02/11/1917 back to England and Frodsham Auxiliary Hospital in Cheshire. The decision was made to amputate and Joseph was transferred to 1st Western General Hospital, at Fazakerly, Liverpool. This was a primary hospital in the UK Military medical system. The leg was amputated on 05/11/1917, apparently successfully, and Joseph was transferred to a ward to recuperate.

However, by early January he was deteriorating. He died on 04/01/1918. The Post Mortem indicated the onset of Diphtheria and Tetanus.

It was the practice of the War Department then for a death from wounds in the United Kingdom to offer the next-of-kin (his wife in this case) the option of a burial in a Military Cemetery near the hospital in which he died, or having the casualty shipped as cargo to a railway station near his home. Lizzie would have asked for the latter. While the War Department would bear most of the cost of this some expense would be borne by the family. Joseph's body was sent by train to the docks, by ship to Belfast, and from there to Waterside Station.

Joseph and his family worshipped at nearby Magheramason Presbyterian church. Grange Old Graveyard near Bready.

+HANNA, William Henry

Royal Irish Rifles. 1st Garrison Btn. Rifleman. G/148. Died 04/01/1918. Age 47. From Bessbrook. Allahabad New Cantonment Cemetery, India

+KERRIGAN, William

Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, 9th Btn. Private. 29693. Died 04/01/1918. Age 47. Son of William and Margrett Kerrigan, of Kilcleen, Castlederg; husband of Sarah Kerrigan, of Albert St., Castlederg, Co. Tyrone. Le Cateau Military Cemetery, France

+McLAUGHLIN, M P

RNR. Deck Hand. 1321/DA. HM Drifter Alfred. Died 04/01/1918. Age 40. Husband to Margaret McLaughlin, Bridge End, Belfast. Milltown Cemetery, Belfast

+MORGAN, R

Royal Irish Fusiliers, 7th/8th Btn. Private. 3819. Died 04/01/1918. Age 26. Son of Robert and Annie Morgan, of 21, Stratheden, Belfast. Unicorn Cemetery, Vendhuile, France

1919

+YATES, Robert Livsey

North Irish Horse. Captain. Died 04/01/1919. Age 41 years old. Husband of Emily Claire Yates, of Londonderry.
Brookwood 1914 - 1918 Memorial

1940

+WRIGHT, Wilfred

RAF. Aircraftman 2nd Class. 538668. Died 04/01/1940, at RAF Warmwell after a short illness. Aged 20. 103 Sqdn. He already had three years service in the RAF when he took ill at a base in Dorset. He died from a cerebral haemorrhage in the sick quarters at RAF Warmwell. Prior to enrolling he worked in the Tavanagh Weaving Factory where his father was a foreman tenter. His father was also a well-known member of the Orange Order, Royal Black Preceptory, and the Independent Order of Rechabites. Wilfred was a member of Hope of Portadown Juvenile Tent Independent Order of Rechabites 1107 from birth. Wilfred was a former member of 1st Portadown (Thomas Street) Boys' Brigade. On Christmas Day, 1939, he had attended two services at Thomas Street Methodist Church while home on leave. On 07/01/1940, the RAF transported the airman's body to Belfast. The Wing Commander of RAF 103 Squadron wrote, "Wilfred was a good and keen airman, and he will be a loss to the service."

The local newspaper noted that "the procession represented all sections of the community. A carrier proceeded by Officer G Crump and a detachment from RAF Aldergrove bore Airman Wright's coffin draped in the Union Flag.

“A band of pipers played laments as the funeral made its way via Thomas Street, Carleton Street, Church Street, Market Street, High Street, and Castle Street. Crowds lined the streets and businesses shut down and drew their blinds.

“The town is moved today as it is not often moved, with a great sympathy and sorrow. The thoughts of many centre in this home as the passing of Mr. Wilfred Wright has brought the war very near to us all. Though he was still in training, we feel he died for his country just the same as if he had died on the battlefield. He was willing to sacrifice himself for the cause of freedom, and our affectionate respect goes out to his father and family.

“The Reverend GA McIlwrath conducted a service at the Wright family home. Reverend JB Jameson also conducted a service at the graveside. After this, a military firing party shot 3 volleys into the air, and a bugler sounded the Last Post and Reveille.”

Born on 06/02/1919, he was the son of James Wright and Esther Wright of Burnbrae Avenue, Portadown, Co. Armagh. He was the third of four brothers. A younger brother, Eric Dudley Wright also served with the Royal Air Force and was in France in 1940. Drumcree Church of Ireland churchyard. Portadown WM. Thomas Street Church WM

1942

+CURRAN, Hugh

Royal Artillery, 27 Searchlight Regt., 390 Bty. Gunner. 1598838. Died 04/01/1942. Age 22. Son of James and Fanny Curran, of Knock Macmanus, Co. Fermanagh.

Alexandria (Hadra) War Memorial Cemetery, Egypt.
Brookeborough WM

+SHEALS, Francis Eric

Royal Artillery, 2nd Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment, 5th Battery. Bombardier. 1486508. Died 04/01/1942. Age 29. He had served in the Middle East and North Africa since December 1939.

Bdr Eric Sheals was an original member of 8th (Belfast) HAA Regiment RA (SR) which included 5 LAA Battery. However, when 9th (Londonderry) HAA Regiment RA (SR) was deployed to Egypt in 1939, its LAA battery (6) was left behind and 5 LAA Battery, then at a training camp in England, was placed under command.

Arriving in Alexandria at the end of November 1939, the Regiment prepared to take over the AA defence of HMS Nile, the RN base in Alexandria, and HMS Grebe, the nearby RNAS station.

Not until May 1940 did their Bofors 40mm guns arrive in Egypt and a single Bofors had to be borrowed from the Royal Egyptian Army for training.

When the Battery's guns did arrive, the necessary gun stores were missing. Even so, two troops (Y and Z) were deployed into defensive positions in Alexandria for harbour defence while X Troop went to Aboukir to defend the airfield there.

The Battery helped train both Australian and New Zealand LAA regiments with two Australian troops coming under

command for a time. On 26 July 1941 the Battery left 9th Regiment and joined 52nd LAA Regiment.

In late September 1941, 5 LAA Battery moved to Tobruk as the Australian garrison was being relieved and remained there until the end of the siege after which it joined the Polish Carpathian Brigade and served with that formation during Operation Crusader.

Although records show that 5 LAA Battery joined 2nd LAA Regiment in October 1940, this isn't borne out by the battery's war diary which show that it was still part of 9th (Londonderry) HAA Regiment until July 1941.

Known as Eric, he was born in Belfast on 18/07/1912. Son of Hugh Townley Sheals and Frances Sheals (née Timbey) of Belfast. His parents married on 10/09/1903 in St. James' C of I parish church, Antrim Rd., Belfast. Hugh was a linen merchant.

Bombardier Sheals had two older siblings, Hubert Stanley Sheals born on 19/06/904 and Ashley Timbey Sheals born on 21/07/1908. The family lived with a widowed grandmother, Eliza Timbey in Ballyfinaghy, Malone, Belfast. In later years, they moved to "Arden", 442 Lisburn Road, Belfast, Co. Antrim.

The family was well-known on the local golf circuit. Eric, his brother Hubert, and father Hugh were members of Balmoral Golf Club. The elder brother represented Ireland at international level.

Eric attended Royal Belfast Academical Institution from 1924 to 1929. His older brother Hubert also attended the same school. Before the outbreak of war, Eric was a civil engineer with Belfast City Surveyors' Department. Benghazi War Cemetery, Libya, North Africa. Named on a family headstone in Belfast City Cemetery

1943

+CARRUTHERS, Robert Morris Liddell

Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, 6th Btn. Lieutenant. 180162. Died 04/01/1943. Aged 22. Lt Carruthers, who was 6 Skins Adjutant and intelligence officer, was hit in the head in a ME 109 attack on the car he was travelling in with the Skins' commanding officer Lieutenant Terence Macartney-Filgate on the road between El-Aroussa and Bou Arada at 0830hrs on 20/12/1942. He died of his wounds 15 days later at the Thibar dressing station. Macartney-Filgate recovered from his wounds, occupied staff positions and was awarded an OBE in 1945. Son of Lieut.- Comdr. Robert Jardine Carruthers, R.N.V.R., and Georgina Rose Carruthers, of Blindley Heath, Surrey; husband to Doris Joan Carruthers, of Katesbridge, Co. Down. Dely Ibrahim War Cemetery, Algeria

+McKEE, Charles James

Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers. 6th Btn. Lieutenant. 235692. Died 04/01/1943. Medicine QUB 1940. Son of Phineas and Helen McKee. Medjez-El-Bab Memorial, Tunisia

1944

+BLAIR, Robert Edward

RAFVR. Sergeant (Air Gunner).1796287. Died 04/01/1944. Aged 19.114 Sqdn. Son of Frederick Charles and Annie Blair, of Belfast. Moro River Canadian War Cemetery, Italy

VETERANS

BAINS, John

RN. AB. 238845. Enrolled 15/04/1909. Re-engaged 13/05/1921. Served to 04/01/1928. War service in Vivid and Challenger**. Born Banbridge 15/04/1891. ADM 188/424/238845

JACKSON, William

RND. Z/3061. Enlisted 04/01/1915. Born 24/11/1891. Son of Mrs Elizabeth Jackson, Jerusalem St., Belfast. ADM339

KIRKWOOD, Walter

RN. Telegraphist. J85643. Boy service from 26/02/1918. Enrolled 04/01/1920 for 12 years. War service in Impregnable, Ganges and Erin. Born Belfast 04/01/1902. Wyndham Street, Belfast. St Enoch's - PCI RH. ADM 188/818/85643

SMYTH, John

RN. AB. 214995. HMS Lion. Jutland. Enrolled 19/09/1903 for 12 years. Demobbed 04/01/1919. War service in Lion (04/06/1912 - 25/07/1917), Vivid I, Blake and Hecla. Born Belfast 19/09/1885. ADM 188/376/214995

****HMS Vivid and HMS Challenger were both stone frigates. Vivid was the former HMS Cuckoo, used as a nominal base ship, and Challenger an accomodation ship at Devonport.**

Every day is a Remembrance Day

We will remember them

To return to Home Page - click on Remembrance NI masthead.

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

remembrance ni

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

Copyright - all material in this **remembrance ni** publication is copyright, and must not be reproduced in print or electronically.

Please forward - information about those who served - names, regiment, ship or unit, date of death to houstonmckelvey@mac.com
