



remembrance ni



Five Belfast men lost escorting largest convoy to Murmansk on February 25, 1944

HMS Maharatta was an M-class destroyer which served during World War II. Begun as Marksman, she was damaged while under construction, and dismantled to be rebuilt on a new slipway.

She was launched as Mahratta in 1942, completed in 1943, and quickly pressed into service. After a short but busy career in the North Atlantic and Arctic, largely guarding merchant convoys, she was torpedoed and sunk on 25 February 1944. Five men from Belfast were lost.

She was laid down on 21 January 1940 but the incomplete ship was blown off the slipway during an air raid in May 1941. Marksman was to have been the lead ship of the M-class destroyers, and the class was sometimes known as the Marksman class. Damage sustained by Marksman was so bad that she had to be dismantled and transferred to an alternative site. The new ship was laid down on 18 August 1941, but she was renamed Mahratta at her launch in July 1942, after the Maratha Empire of India, as a recognition of the financial support given by India to the war effort.

Mahratta was adopted by the people of Walsall, who held a “Warship Week” from 7–14 February 1942, aiming to raise £700,000 – the cost of a warship. She was completed on 8 April 1943 and entered service on that date. During trials in May 1943 HMS Mahratta escorted RMS Queen Mary part way across the Atlantic.

Duties

Operations: FJ, 2-6-1943. 7-7-1943. SF, 30-7-1943. Lozry, 26-8-1943.

Sailed with Convoys:

FR, 20-10-1943 - 28-10-1943.

FH, 8-6-1943. Camera, Governor, 26-7-1943. Lorry or RA-54A, 1-11-1943 - 14-11-1943. JW-54A, 15-11-1943 - 24-11-1943. RA-54B, 26-11-1943 - 9-12-1943. JW-56B, 22-1-1944 - 1-2-1944. RA-56, 3-2-1944 - 11-2-1944. JW-57, 20-2-1944 - 28-2-1944.

She took part in six operations and escorted seven convoys. The operations included the relief of the garrison at Spitzbergen, Norway. Another was a speed run to Murmansk, Russia. In July 1943 she was part of an attempt to lure the Tirpitz out of her Norwegian base.

In September 1943, Mahratta was sent to the Mediterranean with HMS Matchless to escort HMS Valiant to Plymouth for repairs. Matchless broke down on the way back, and was taken in tow by Mahratta. The chain later broke, and after this Mahratta rescued some survivors from a Coastal Command Halifax aircraft that had been shot down by a German U-boat. They had spent eleven days in the water. Mahratta arrived in Plymouth on 11/10/1943 and later that month sailed north again to Scapa Flow and Seidisfjord to escort Convoy JW 54A as part of Operation FR.

Convoy JW - 57

Local escorts which sailed on the 22nd February, were the minesweepers HYDRA, LOYALTY, ORESTES and RATTLESNAKE, and the corvettes BURDOCK and DIANELLA. Close by the escorts from the 20th to the 28th February were the destroyers BEAGLE, BOADICEA, KEPPEL and WALKER, and the corvettes were BLUEBELL,

The Times 18th March 1944

LOSS OF DESTROYER MAHRATTA

The Board of Admiralty regret to announce that the destroyer H.M.S. Mahratta (Lieut.-Commander E. A. F. Drought, D.S.C., R.N.) has been lost. The next-of-kin of casualties have been informed.

✱ Lieutenant-Commander Drought was awarded the D.S.C. in 1941 for distinguished services in effecting the withdrawal of troops from the beaches of Greece. He has been in command of the Quorn and the Mendip, and of the Mahratta since February, 1943. The Mahratta (formerly the Marksman) was one of the Laforey class and was built at Greenock.

CAMELLIA, LOTUS and RHODODENDRON.

On the 22nd February the Flag ship, cruiser BLACK PRINCE joined with the destroyers MAHRATTA, MATCHLESS, METEOR, MILNE, OBEDIENT, OFFA, ONSLAUGHT, ORIBI, SAVAGE, SERAPIS, SWIFT, VERULAM and VIGILANT. All these ships stayed until the

28th February, except MAHRATTA, because on the 25th February she was struck by two T5 Gnat torpedoes fired by U-990, off the coast of Norway. She sank and only 16 of the 236 crew survived.

Also on the 22nd February the destroyers WANDERER and WATCHMAN, and frigates BYRON and STRULE, escorted the carrier CHASER to join the convoy, they stayed until the 26th February. Cruiser cover was provided by BERWICK and JAMAICA on the 26th and 27th February.

Although Mahratta was lost, the convoy was a success. It was the largest convoy ever sent to Russia. The convoy arrived at Kola Inlet on the 28th February.

A memorial to those who lost their lives on the Arctic Convoys was unveiled at Murmansk in 1991, on the 50th anniversary of the first Arctic Convoy.

On this Day – February 25

1941

Hunt-class destroyer HMS Exmoor was torpedoed and sunk by German E-boat S-30 off Lowestoft while on convoy escort duty. Casualties were heavy: 104 men lost.

British Commando's land on the Italian held Island of Castelorizzo in the Dodecanese.

The British submarine, HMS Upholder, sinks the Italian Cruiser Armando Diaz to the southwest of Malta.

British Nigerian troops of the 11th African Division occupy Mogadishu, the capital of Italian Somaliland, having advanced up the coast.

The 12th African Division pushes up the river Juba in Italian Somaliland towards the Abyssinian border town of Dolo.

First delivery of Martin B-26 Marauder medium bombers to US Army Air Force.

1942

After the withdrawal of ABDA HQ from Java, Wavell himself now leaves for Australia.

The debate in the House of Commons comes to a close with many speakers being sharply critical of government policy, with the bombing of Germany being called in to question.

1943

The RAF begins a round the clock bombing campaign in Tunisia, with 2,000 raids in the next 48 hours.

First time US Eighth Air Force (based in England) and US Fifteenth Air Force (based in Italy) bomb the same target—Regensburg, Germany.

U-boats break off attack on Allied North Atlantic convoy ON-166; 15 of 49 ships have been lost since February 21.

US reoccupies abandoned Kasserine Pass.

In New Zealand, Japanese POWs attempt escape; 48 POWs and one guard killed.

1944

I-class destroyer HMS Inglefield sank following a direct hit

from a Henschel Hs293 glider bomb off Anzio. 35 men died and there were 157 survivors.

Convoy JW-57 (43 ships and 19 escorts) sailing from Loch Ewe to the Kola Peninsula, is attacked on 25 February off Norway. One destroyer, HMS Mahratta, is sunk by U-990. U.S. forces destroy 135 Japanese planes in Marianas and Guam.

1945

Turkey declares war against Germany.

400 RAF bombers carry out attacks against Dortmund and Rheine.

US Fifth Fleet carrier aircraft and B-29 bombers strike Tokyo in devastating raid.

US M26 Pershing tanks are first used in combat in Europe, by the US 3rd Armored Division near the Roer River.

Roll of Honour – February 25

Representing their comrades who died on this day

1915

+KELLY, John Joseph

Irish Guards. 1st Bn. Private. 4876. Died 25/02/1915. Aged 26. Brother of James Kelly, of 67, St. Columb's Wells, Londonderry. Bethune Town Cemetery, Pas de Calais, France

+McKAY, William

Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, 2nd Btn. Private. 4125. Died

25/02/1915. Age 19. Son of Samuel and Margaret McKay, of Long Commons, Coleraine. Brown's Road Military Cemetery, Festubert, France

+McGURK, James

Royal Scots, 1st Btn. Private. 3802. Died 25/02/1915. Aged 36. Born in Cookstown. The family moved to live in Glasgow. He and his wife Matilda had five children. James appears to have enlisted first in August 1914 for one year in 3rd Royal Scots (Depot Battalion). Dickebusch New Military Cemetery, West-Vlaanderen, Belgium. Cookstown WM.

1917

+DEMPSEY, James Joseph

Royal Irish Rifles, 1st Btn. A Coy. Rifleman. 8625. Died 25/02/1917. Age 36 years old. Son of James and Catherine Dempsey, of Belfast; husband of Lizzie Dempsey, of 31, English St., Belfast. Bray Military Cemetery, France

+FITZSIMONS, John

Royal Irish Rifles. 7th Btn. Lance Corporal. 5809. Died 25/02/1917. Aged 17. John Fitzsimons was born on 06/02/1898 in Craigavad. Elder son of Martin and Susan Fitzsimons (nee Urquhart, sometimes Orchard) of Dalchoolin Lodge, Craigavad. They married on 04/12/1896 in Sandys Street Presbyterian Church, Newry. At the time of the wedding, both Martin and Susan were living and working in Poyntzpass – Martin as a footman and Susan as a cook. They had five children.

Martin Fitzsimons worked as butler (a position he held for sixty years) and Susan Fitzsimons worked as housekeeper

in Dalchoolin House at Craigavad. This house was built in 1839, has since been demolished and the site is now occupied by the Transport Museum part of the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum. In February 1915 Johnnie Fitzsimons enlisted in Belfast (aged 17) and in a postcard sent to his mother on 16/02/1915 he said that 'he was liking soldiering a treat'. After he was posted to the Front he continued to write home regularly and his letters ranged over issues from the mundane to the intensely poignant. He told his family about being picked for the signallers and how he was hoping for a transfer to Water Transport. He said, 'I have seen no place as nice as Craigavad' and he thanked his mother for the cake she had sent. He was being paid in French money and was suffering problems with his neuralgia.

He described the fearful noise from the guns, the deafening crashes and the sky illuminated with flashes from the guns – he called them *Sister Susies*. During bombardments, conditions were 'hellish', soldiers often lying in shell holes amongst 'dead men and bursting shells'.

On one occasion Johnnie suffered from shell shock when he was lying in a shallow trench with no cover and a big shell burst beside him. Many men were killed and he was hospitalised for a short period.

Back in the trenches he volunteered to lay out the telephone wire prior to a surprise bombing raid on enemy trenches. He went out at 3.00 am to lay the wire. Then at 3.30 am when the moon went down he went over the top again 'with the bombers and the bayonet men'. He described how everything was done very quietly 'until you spring into the

enemy trench'. This was in contrast to a charge where 'all go over the top cheering with the guns roaring round you'.

Lance Corporal Johnnie Fitzsimons wrote his last letter home on 09/02/1917. He said that he was out of the trenches for a period of eight days and he dreaded going back in again 'to the bitter cold of an icy fire trench'.

Later that month a telegram brought the dreaded news of his death – Lance Corporal John Fitzsimons died of wounds received in action, at 11.45 pm on 25/02/1917 at No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station in France. Bailleul Communal Cemetery Extension (Nord), France. Hollywood and District WM. Holy Trinity C of I Parish Church Craigavad

+McALLISTER, Andrew

Royal Irish Rifles, 9th Btn. Serjeant.15325. Died 25/02/1917. Aged 23. Son of Andrew and Isabella McAllister, of Thornton, Belfast Rd., Carrickfergus, Co. Antrim. Native of Belfast. St. Quentin Cabaret Military Cemetery, Hainaut, Belgium

+McDOWELL, Robert

North Staffordshire Regiment. Second Lieutenant. MC. Died 25/02/1917. Member of the Training Corps 1915. Commissioned 26/03/1916, he embarked for Mesopotamia at Devonport on the 07/05/1916, arriving in Basrah on July 4. He joined his battalion in the field on July 28. On 11/01/1917 he assumed command of 'C' Company along with Captain Robinson. On 25/01/1917 he was wounded in action. On this date, his battalion took part in an assault on the first Turkish Line on the West bank of the Hai. Their casualties were quite severe with eight officers being killed,

wounded or missing. After many bodies had been recovered the final tally was 55 men killed, 163 wounded and 46 missing.

For his gallantry in this action, Robert was awarded the Military Cross (London Gazette 17/03/17. and 26/05/17). The commanding officer of the battalion, Lieutenant Colonel Henderson was killed in action and awarded a posthumous Victoria Cross. The award of Robert's Military Cross was recorded in the Order of the Day No 51 (Mesopotamia Exp Force – 08/02/1917). The citation : “For conspicuous gallantry in action. He led his company in the assault, and after all the remaining officers of the battalion had become casualties, he assumed command of the whole line. He reorganized his men and maintained his position in spite of strong enemy counter-attack”.

Robert had been admitted to Basrah General Hospital on January 28 being discharged to convalescence on February 3. On the 19th of that month he rejoined his battalion. He was killed in action on February 25, one month to the day from the action which had resulted in the award of his Military Cross.

On February 24, along with others, the battalion crossed the River Tigris and bivouacked for the night. Then, at 0500 the following day, the 13th Division commenced the pursuit of the enemy. After the 38th Brigade had first engaged the Turks at approximately 1330 the 13th was ordered to advance with the North Staffs on the left. After a rapid advance over three miles the objective was sighted and the Turks opened fire at 1500 yards. Bayonets were fixed as the Brigade charged over the last 50 yards causing the enemy

to retire before they reached the nullah.

Later that day, after re-organisation it was found that four officers, including 2nd Lieut McDowell MC had been killed and two wounded. In the other ranks, 27 men had been killed, 81 wounded and there were 34 men missing.

He had been for ten years in the service of Messrs Bradley and Robb, boot and shoe merchants, 56 Victoria Street, Belfast when he joined the Army. Robert was identified with some of the activities of McQuiston Memorial Presbyterian Church. He was for five years secretary of the Junior Department of the Sunday school. He passed through the Boys Brigade and the Bible Class and also associated himself with the social life of the church. A first class athlete, he was a member of the McQuiston Cricket eleven which won the Boys Brigade Shield on two successive seasons. He was a fine tennis player. Son of the late Mr Robert M'Dowell, Jocelyn Gardens, Belfast, who was for many years a foreman in the employ of the City Corporation. He was one of three brothers, two of whom joined the army.

+MOORE Samuel Kerr

Rifle Brigade. 2nd Btn. Second Lieutenant. Formerly South African Infantry, 3rd. Btn. Private. 688. Died 25/02/1918. Age 28. Born on 18/01/1890 at 21 Annalee Street, Belfast. A son of John and Annabella Slater Moore (nee Edmonds, born Co Longford) who lived in Belfast and Bangor – in Holborn Street, then Clifton Street and then Central Avenue. They had at least fifteen. Samuel Kerr Moore moved to South Africa and shortly after the outbreak of war he enlisted and served under General Botha, fighting against the Germans in the South-West Campaign. At the end of that campaign

he was discharged and subsequently re-enlisted in the South African Infantry for service in Europe. After a brief spell in Egypt at the beginning of 1916 he was transferred to the Western Front where he was twice wounded. In 1917 he was sent to a cadet unit where he qualified for a temporary commission and was gazetted to the Rifle Brigade (*London Gazette* 08/05/1917). After he died his company commander wrote, 'He was hit in the head by a machine-gun bullet. Everything possible was done for him but he was unconscious from the start and he died on the way to the dressing station'. Mrs M. Cameron of 35 Kenilworth Court, Putney, received his medals. Oxford Road Cemetery, Belgium

1919

+CAMPBELL, John

Royal Army Service Corps. Private. M/299865. Died 25/02/1919. Age 21. Son of John Campbell, of 15, Mountain View St., Belfast. Milltown Roman Catholic Cemetery, Belfast

+PORTER, A

Royal Engineers. 149th A.T. Coy. Sapper. 64202. Died 25/02/1919. Wounded 01/07/1916. Age 24. Son of Robert and Elizabeth Porter, of 53, Foyle Rd., Londonderry. Londonderry City Cemetery. Derry Cathedral WM

1942

+GIRVAN, Thomas

Royal Artillery. Bombardier. 1486429. Died 25/02/1942. Aged 51. 315 Anti Aircraft Battery. Husband of Amelia

Girvan (Nee Patton) of Whitehouse. Greencastle (St Mary)
Roman Catholic Churchyard

+WILSON, Richard

Royal Ulster Rifles, 1st (Airborne) Btn. Rifleman. 7013415.
Died 25/02/1942 as a result of injuries sustained in an
explosion. Aged 27. Son of Elizabeth Hogg, of Belfast.
Belfast City Cemetery, Glenalina Extension

1943

+BEATTIE, John Harwood

RN. Warrant Writer Officer. HMS Victory. Died 25/02/1943.
Age 46. He had been home four weeks prior to his death
and received the congratulations of friends on his recent
promotion. He had 25 years' service. Served in HMS
Birmingham, Fearless and Inconstant. In 1921 he was
promoted Second Writer while serving in HMS Curacoa. He
served as Captain's Writer in HMS Cornflower whilst on the
China station from 1931 - 34. An enthusiastic cricketer he
was a brother of Alfie Beattie a well known Waringstown
cricketer and cousin of Ruric and Jack Harwood also
members of the club. Husband to Evelyn May Beattie,
Waringstown. Son of Samuel John and Elizabeth Beattie,
Waringstown. Holy Trinity, Waringstown, C of I Churchyard.
Belfast Weekly Telegraph 05/03/1943.

+CROCKER, William Robert

Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers. 1st Bn. Fusilier. 6976088. Died
25/02/1943. Aged 32. Son of Robert and Mary Anne
Crocker, of Belfast, Northern Ireland; husband to Elizabeth
Crocker. of Belfast. Medjez-el-Bab Memorial, Tunisia

+MAGUIRE, Anthony

Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers. 6th Btn. Fusilier. 6984981. Died

25/02/1943. Aged 22. Son of Patrick Joseph and Julia Jane Maguire, of Hollybrook, Co. Fermanagh. Medjez-el-Bab War Cemetery, Tunisia

1944

HMS MAHRATTA

HMS Mahratta was an M-class destroyer which served during World War II. Begun as Marksman, she was damaged while under construction, and dismantled to be rebuilt on a new slipway. She was launched as Mahratta in 1942, completed in 1943, and quickly pressed into service. After a short but busy career in the North Atlantic and Arctic, largely guarding merchant convoys, she was torpedoed and sunk on 25/02/1944.

+FULTON, David

RN. AB. D/JX148901. HMS Mahratta. Died 25/02/1944. Age 25. Son of Hugh and Mary Fulton, Geoffrey St., Belfast. (Belfast Weekly Telegraph 31/03/1944). Plymouth Naval Memorial, Panel 86

+HICKS, George

RN. Leading Seaman. D/SSX 22741. Date of Death: 25/02/1944. Age: 26. HMS Mahratta. Son of Robert and Evelyn Hicks, Belfast. Plymouth Naval Memorial, Panel 85

+JONES, Samuel Edwin

RN. Seaman. D/JX 649439. Died 25/02/1944. Age 19. HMS Mahratta. Son of Samuel Edward and Rebecca Amelia Jones, Courtrai St., Belfast. (Belfast Weekly Telegraph 24/03/1944). Plymouth Naval Memorial, Panel 88

+KEAG, Samuel

RN. Officers' Steward. D/LX 25821. Died 25/02/1944. Age

20. HMS Mahratta. Son of David and Annie Keag, Gaffikin St., Belfast. (Belfast Weekly Telegraph 24/03/1944).
Plymouth Naval Memorial, Panel 91

+NEILLY, Albert

RN. Petty Officer Telegraphist. D/JX 153420. Died 25/02/1944. Aged 37. HMS Mahratta. Son of Joseph B. and Martha Neilly, Ogilvie St., Belfast. (Belfast Weekly Telegraph 07/04/1944) Plymouth Naval Memorial, Panel 88.

1944

+McCORMICK, John Payne

RAFVR. Sergeant. 1493956. Died 25/02/1944. Age 20. 514 Sqd. Son of Samuel and Sarah McCormick, of Belfast.
Durnbach War Cemetery, Germany

+MONTGOMERY, David

North Staffordshire Regiment, 2nd Btn. Corporal. 7043852. Died 25/02/1944. Age 22. Son of Alexander and Elizabeth Montgomery, of Upperlands, Co. Londonderry. Naples War Cemetery. Italy

1945

+CRAWFORD, Richard St. John Trevor

RAFVR. Flight Sergeant. 1073650. Died 22/05/1945. Aged 22. Son of Robert James Crawford and Ruth Dorothy Crawford of Belfast. Carnmoney Cemetery East

+PELAN, Henry Girvan

RAF. Corporal. 648059. Died 25/02/1945. Aged 33. Son of James Pelan, and of Elizabeth Pelan, of Lisburn; husband

to Mary Eleanor Pelan, of Lisburn. Singapore Memorial, Column 452

1946

+BONNAR, William McKee

RAFVR. Squadron Leader. 108613. Died 25/02/1946. Aged 28. QUB, MB, BCh, BAO 1939, MD 1942. Son of Samuel and Elizabeth Ellen Bonnar, of Carnmoney. Kirkee War Cemetery, India. QUB RH

VETERANS

DOUGALL, Robert

North Irish Horse. Lance Corporal. Robert James Dougall was born on 3 December 1897 at Rowellan, Oldpark Road, Belfast, second of two children of commercial coal clerk William John Dougall and his wife Martha (nee Fraser). Dougall enlisted in the North Irish Horse at Belfast on 01/09/1914 (No.1070 – later Corps of Hussars No. H/71222), aged just 16.

He embarked for France with a reinforcement draft for A and C Squadrons on 20/01/1915, being posted to the former squadron. He remained with the regiment throughout the war.

Dougall was one of eight North Irish Horsemen mentioned in Field-Marshal Haig's despatch of 16/03/1919 for "distinguished and gallant service and devotion to duty" during the period 16 September 1918 to 15 March 1919.

He was transferred to Class Z, Army Reserve, on 25/02/1919.

ERVIN, Wilson

RN. FAA. CBE. Petty Officer. Radar. Served 4 years. HMS Illustrious. Served in home waters as well as South Africa, the Far East, Ceylon, Burma and Australia. His 21st birthday was spent in the Indian Ocean. Served in Pacific, experienced kamikaze attacks. Off Burma when war ended. Attended Stramillis and Fane Street Primary Schools, and RBAI. Joined the Belfast Banking Company on 15/04/1942 at Dungannon branch. He returned from active service on 22/08/1946. Post-war career in banking, from clerk to chief executive and managing director of Northern Bank in Ireland. He attended the 2000 re-dedication ceremony of the Bank's Rolls of Honour. Governor of RBAI, Vice President of RNLI, RUAS. Trustee of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland and elder of Fisherwick Church from where his funeral took place 25/02/2015. Aged 91. Son of Robert John Ervin, Lucerne Parade, Belfast. Husband to Joan who predeceased him.

KEENAN, Robert Millar

Robert Keenan served in the army during World War Two. Born on 01/07/1903, he was the son of James Keenan and Martha Keenan (née Nelson) of Belfast. His place of birth was quarters attached to Chichester Street Fire Station, Belfast, Co. Antrim.

The Irish Census of 2nd April 1911 lists the family at 15 Tenth Street, Woodvale, Belfast. James and Martha are 48 and 47 years old. The children vary in age; Thomas (27), Hugh (22), Mary (19), John (16), James (11), Robert (8), Frances (6).

On 02/04/1925, he and Isabella Mary Fitzpatrick married at St. Anne's Cathedral. Robert's home was still at 15 Tenth Street, Belfast, Co. Antrim. Isabella was from the nearby 168 Agnes Street, Belfast, Co. Antrim. John Keenan and Agnes Millar witnessed the ceremony.

Isabella gave birth to a daughter Martha Nelson Keenan on 12/08/1926. Martha died in infancy on 14/05/1927. A son who took his father's name was born on 08/04/1928. A second daughter, Sarah Keenan was born on 22/02/1930. 1930 also saw the death of Robert's mother Martha Keenan on 16/03/1930 in Donaghadee.

Keenan enlisted in the army at Belfast, on 12/02/1940. He enlisted into the Auxiliary Military Pioneer Corps and was posted to No. 5 Training Centre as a Private. On 13th March 1940, he was posted to 83 Company.

Between 27/03/1940 and 22/06/1940, Robert Keenan fought in northern France. With the British Expeditionary Force, he would have been part of the evacuation at Dunkirk. On his return to the United Kingdom, he was injured in Coventry when the Luftwaffe attacked in 1940.

The next few years saw Robert Millar Keenan posted to the following:

- 15th Battalion Royal Warwickshire Regiment on 26/08/1941.
- 31st Battalion Royal Warwickshire Regiment on 10/01/1942.
- 114 General Transport Company, Royal Army Service Corps on 15/02/1942.

- 100 General Transport Company, Royal Army Service Corps on 07/03/1942.
- 22 Initial Training Centre, Royal Warwickshire Regiment on 10/08/1942.
- 8th Battalion Royal Warwickshire Regiment on 27/08/1942.
- 31st Battalion Royal Warwickshire Regiment on 19t/10/1942.
- No. 29 Prisoner of War Camp on 12/11/1942.

From 26/11/1942 to 17/08/1945, he was with 1st Army in North Africa and Italy. He was released to the army reserve on 21/11/1945 and discharged on 10/02/1954. Keenan received the following medals for his service during World War Two:

- 1939-1945 Star.
- Africa Star with First Army Clasp.
- Italy Star.
- Defence Medal.
- British War Medal 1939-1945.

On 10/01/1943, Robert and Isabella had another daughter named Isabella Mary Keenan in Coleraine. Isabella died aged 2 years old on 19/03/1945 in Belfast. 23/11/1946 brought the death of Robert's father James Keenan.

On 25/02/1958, Robert Millar Keenan died at his home at 37 Ballysillan Drive, Belfast. His funeral was to Belfast City Cemetery.

McCREARY, Samuel Fulton

North Irish Horse. Second Lieutenant. Samuel Fulton McCreary was the second son of Robert and Maggie McCreary of Straidlands. He was born on 25/02/1885. He attended the National School in Ballyclare and grew up on the family farm until WW1 started when he joined the North Irish Horse because of his familiarity with horses.

Samuel enlisted in the North Irish Horse at Belfast on 19/10/1914. In January he was promoted to lance corporal and in June to the rank of corporal. On 17/11/1915 he embarked for France with F Squadron of the North Irish Horse, which was then serving as divisional cavalry to the 33rd Division. In June 1916 the squadron joined with C Squadron and the 6th (Inniskilling) Dragoons Service Squadron to form the 2nd North Irish Horse Regiment. In May 1917 he applied for a commission in the cavalry.

He left France that June and in September reported for duty at the No.2 Cavalry Cadet School at Kildare. After some months he passed the necessary assessments (being noted as a "good horse master"). He was commissioned as a 2nd lieutenant on 06/04/1918 and posted to the 2nd Reserve Cavalry Regiment.

When he relinquished his commission on 11/03/1919, Samuel came home and farmed with his father before buying Lismenary Farm and marrying Meta Smith. Sam and Meta had three children, Robert, Beth and Peter. He never

ever discussed the war with anyone. Samuel's brother, Robert also fought in the war.

Every day is a Remembrance Day

We will remember them

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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

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