



remembrance ni



The liberation of Bergen-Belsen

On 15/04/1945 British forces liberated Bergen-Belsen. Thousands of bodies lay unburied around the camp and

some 60,000 starving and mortally ill people were packed together without food, water or basic sanitation.

Many were suffering from typhus, dysentery and starvation.

Bergen-Belsen was first established in 1940 as a prisoner of war camp. From 1943, Jewish civilians with foreign passports were held as 'leverage' in possible exchanges for Germans interned in Allied countries or for money. It later became a concentration camp and was used as a collection centre for survivors of the death marches. The camp became exceptionally overcrowded and, as a result of the Germans' neglect, conditions were allowed to deteriorate further in the last months of the war, causing many more deaths.

As a result of overcrowded and horrific living conditions, where disease and starvation flourished, tens of thousands of people imprisoned there died. Anne Frank was one of the people deported to Bergen-Belsen.

Soon after liberation, Bergen-Belsen gained international notoriety as a site of Nazi mass murder.

The first liberators

Major Dick Williams was one of the first British soldiers to enter Bergen-Belsen. In April 1945, he was a staff captain in the Supplies and Transport branch of VIII Corps Headquarters and was part of a small force sent forward to assess conditions in the camp. Gilbert King was a gunner attached to 249 (Oxfordshire Yeomanry) Battery of the 63rd Anti-Tank Regiment, Royal Artillery, which was the first British military unit to go into Bergen-Belsen on 15 April.

Medical treatment

32nd Casualty Clearing Station (CCS) and 11th Light Field Ambulance were among the first medical units to arrive at Bergen-Belsen after its liberation. William Arthur Wood, a medical assistant with 32nd CCS, describes the appalling conditions in the barracks and the process of separating the dead from the living.

"Outside the huts were piles and piles of dead bodies"

Many of the soldiers who first entered the camp were desperate to try and alleviate the prisoners' starvation by giving them army rations.

This first intake of food was fatal for many prisoners, who were too weak to digest it. One of the British Army's most important tasks, as Major Dick Williams explains, was to find a safer and more appropriate way of providing food for the starving prisoners.

Nearly 100 British medical students arrived at Bergen-Belsen in May 1945 to assist with the relief effort. They worked directly in the huts to supervise the distribution of food and provide whatever medical care possible. Dr Roger Dixey, one of the students who volunteered at the camp, describes his work and the condition of the prisoners in the barracks. 'We were dealing with the killer, the main killer, which was typhus.'

The Irish at Belsen

Father Michael Morrison SJ entered Belsen on 15 April 1945. Having decided to say a Mass there, he considered calling it off because of heavy rain on the day. But as he walked to his makeshift altar, he was shocked to see

hundreds of people of different nationalities and from different religions waiting for the Mass to start. Proof, if needed, of the essential spiritual dimension of life.

"And Jesus answered him, saying, It is written, 'that man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God'".

Service personnel and relatives killed during the Belfast Blitz 55,000 homes destroyed



On the 15th April 1941, Belfast was hammered in one of the largest and most devastating aerial bombardments of World War II. Some 200 Luftwaffe bombers hurled their high incendiary bombs at targets around the city resulting in almost 1,000 people losing their lives and a further 1,500 being injured. This was the greatest loss of life in one night of any bombing raid on the United Kingdom during the war.

The anti-aircraft batteries did not fire upon the German bombers as they believed that the RAF would come to their assistance and they did not want to fire mistakenly on the

RAF fighters. Sadly the RAF did not respond and the bombers dropped their payloads with impunity.

As the Antrim Road water works had been wrecked in the bombing there was little or no water pressure to fight the fires so the city burned virtually unchecked. Some 55,000 homes had been destroyed, over half the houses in the city, leaving over 100,000 people homeless. Two hospitals were damaged, eleven churches were destroyed and two schools rendered inoperable.

The Luftwaffe targeted Belfast because it was a manufacturing centre and crucial for the British war effort. Germany, therefore, saw Northern Ireland as a legitimate target and sought to stop the flow of materials into England.

The shipyards at Harland and Wolff employed 35,000 people and were the largest in the world. They built ships for the Royal Navy and some of the most renowned were the aircraft carriers HMS Formidable and Unicorn as well as the cruisers HMS Belfast and HMS Penelope. This shipyard as well as others in Belfast renovated and repaired over 3,000 ships for the Royal Navy as well as 500,000 tons of merchant ships; a formidable asset to the English war effort.

Not only did Belfast manufacture ships, but Short Brothers built aircraft; most notably the Sunderland Flying Boat and the Stirling long range bomber. Bofors anti-aircraft shells were produced in the hundreds of thousands by James Mackie and Sons and Churchill tanks were built by Harland engineering Works. The Irish linen industry produced thousands of yards of high-quality aero-linen cloth that was used for covering airplane fuselages. Other smaller industrial enterprises produced gun parts, mountings,

aircraft parts and all types of ordinance parts for shells and weapons.



Papers recovered after the war detailed the German's understanding of Belfast and they had intelligence that Belfast was protected by just seven anti-aircraft batteries; the most abysmal defences in all of Great Britain. The Germans identified the following areas as strategic targets, Harland and Wolff Ltd shipyard, the Short Bros. aircraft factory, the Belfast power station, the Rank & Co mill, and the Victoria Barracks.

On the night of April 7-8 1941, a small raid took place. It is thought that this raid was designed to test the Belfast defence set-up. As there was little in the way of defence, the major raid took place a little over a week later on April 15 with devastating effects on the city. The third Luftwaffe raid

took place on the night of May 4-5, 1941 with 150 people killed but thousands of incendiary bombs were dropped. The last raid took place on the night of May 5-6, 1941.

The UK government faced considerable anger as there were only 200 public shelters. There were no searchlights

as they had only just arrived for installation and there was no smokescreen ability and no barrage balloons. In short the city was woefully unprepared for such an attack. The neutral Irish, south of the border, responded immediately to calls for help from their Northern Irish neighbours. Firemen and tenders were sent to assist and whatever help could be given in this area was given to the people of Belfast.

Blitz impact on service community

The blitzes of Belfast impacted on the service community in different ways. Individual service men were killed. The families of those serving elsewhere obviously were in great danger. At least one serviceman's family was completely lost.

As the docks and shipbuilding facilities were targeted, naval fatalities were almost inevitable.

Two men attached to HMS Caroline were killed - they were Able Seamen Frank Mundy Coombs who died on 15/04/1941 and Victor Frank Dolan who died on 20/06/1941.

Two crew members of HMS La Malouine a Flower Class corvette died on 05/05/1941. Steward Stanley G. Ash was 22 years old and the son of Florence Hatch from Trumpington, Cambridge. Ordinary Seaman James Taylor was 23 years old and the son of Edward and Annie Taylor from Bristols Hope, Newfoundland. He previously had been Mentioned in Dispatches. These men were aboard HMS La Malouine on the night of the 4th / 5th May 1941 when the Luftwaffe bombed the city in what was known as "The Fire Raid". Both men died by a bomb which was a near miss but damaged the ship.



Warrant Officer First Class, Regimental Sergeant Major, Henry Phillips was serving with 6th Battalion Royal Ulster Rifles and died on 16th April 1941.

Lance Corporal Harry Norman Pickup was serving with the Pioneer Corps. He was 22 years old and the son of Henry and Janet Pickup from Pinner, Middlesex. He died on 5th May 1941.

Private Felix Marasi of the Pioneer Corps was the son of Felix and Margherita Marasi. He was Killed on 5th May 1941.

Marine Thomas Douglas Harvey was 52 years old and was based at the HMS Royal Arthur Shore Establishment. He died on the night of 8th / 9th May 1941. He was the son of Thomas and Ellen Harvey of Belfast.

Captain Ronald Victor Kingston was 28 years old and the son of Thomas and Lucy of Wandsworth, London. He was on the General List and was killed on the night of 15th / 16th April 1941. He was a Liveryman of the Vintners Company.

Gunner's five children and wife died

William Douglas was serving with the Royal Artillery on the night of 15th / 16th April 1941 when the Luftwaffe blitzed Belfast and his wife and children were killed.

The Douglas family lived at 8 Ballynure Street off the Oldpark Road in Belfast. The family had been staying at 4 Ballynure Street when it was bombed.

William's wife Emily was 29 years old. Son Samuel was 9 years old. Son William was 8 years old. Son James was 7 years old. Daughter Margaret was 5 years old. Daughter Sarah was 12 months old

The Clarke Family lived at 4 Ballynure Street and their fatalities were - Jeremiah (Husband) aged 49, Lavinia (Wife) aged 49, Robert aged 26, Jeremiah Gerald aged 17, William aged 15, John aged 13, Cecil aged 12, Desmond aged 10.

The Douglas Family headstone lists all five children however according to a book on Belfast City Cemetery, "

Written in Stone" by Tom Hartley, there are only three of the children buried there with their mother, with no record of either Samuel or James. This would suggest that the remains of these two young children were never identified or located.

Caroline naval medic adrift whilst Belfast home is bombed

Matthew Dermot Edwards a Surgeon Lieutenant - Commander, RNVR, in HMS Caroline was mobilised September 1939 and appointed to RN Barracks, Deal.

Early in 1940 he was appointed to HMS Mohawk, Tribal Class Destroyer, 4th Destroyer Flotilla and served in the Norwegian campaign. He subsequently served in the North Sea and when Mohawk evacuated the British Ambassador from The Hook of Holland to Tilbury. Moved to the Mediterranean as part of the 14th Destroyer Flotilla based at Alexandria, Mowhawk took part in action against the Italian Battle Fleet of Cape Spartivento. Went to Gallipoli to bring down Shell petrol barges from Rumania. Bombarded Bardia. Bombarded Vellona as a diversion during Fleet Air Arm Attack on Taranto. In April 1941 Mowhawk was based in Malta to intercept convoys supporting Rommel in North Africa. In an action in which 3 enemy destroyers and 4 or 5 transports were destroyed, Mohawk was sunk.

Matthew Edwards spent time on a raft before being rescued by HMS Nubian. The same night this occurred his house in Belfast was destroyed by enemy action in the blitz.

Taken back to Egypt in a Merchant Ship he then served in HMS Stag, the Shore Establishment in Ismalia until October, 1942. His subsequent service was with the Fleet Air Arm at Machrihanish until the end of 1943. Then in Formidable in dry dock in Belfast. In 1944 he was appointed to Fleet Air Arm in Ceylon and promoted Lieutenant-Commander. In 1945 he was appointed to RN Dockyard, Chatham, in Industrial Practice.

Belfast WRNS Officer commuted during the blitz

WRNS.3rd Officer Nancy Rowson, nee Redmond, enlisted in August 1940.

She served in HMS Titania, a submarine depot ship anchored in Belfast Harbour. Nancy lived at home and

commuted four miles by car with a gas bag on the roof, even during the blitz. She and her family slept in a shelter in the garden over this period. She had completed officer training at RN College Greenwich. Her other wartime responsibilities included cypher duties on Hoy, at Scapa Floe including Watch keeping hours, including cyphers for signals with Russian and Atlantic convoys. Posted early in 1945 to FAA station at Eglinton, she was present at the surrender of eight U - boats on 14/05/1945. She was demobbed in December 1945.

Aircraft carrier HMS Furious aided air defence of Belfast

The aircraft carrier HMS Furious was in Belfast during the blitzes of April 1941 and provided a significant amount of air defence.

In the second blitz she was hit by a 250lb bomb that penetrated the flying deck in to the hangar decks below where the original armoured battle cruiser deck prevented further penetration. Fortunately during the refit no aircraft were aboard.

In Furious during the blitz was **Fleet Air Arm, Chief Petty Officer, Sydney Waller**. He transferred from RAF to FAA in 1939. Served in carriers HMS Furious and HMS Attacker 03/1940 - 10/1944. Served his first period in Arctic waters during Norwegian campaign in 1940. He served on Furious between March 1940 and October 1941. Furious was one of the few fleet aircraft carriers at outbreak of war and the only one of those to survive the war. Originally laid down as a battle cruiser carrying the largest naval guns, 18 inch, of her day she was converted to an aircraft carrier in 1917. Equipped with two squadrons of relatively obsolete

Swordfish biplanes, during the campaign the squadrons suffered a fifty percent casualty rates and finished with virtually no serviceable aircraft. Furious escaped the campaign relatively unscathed. Her sister ship Glorious was sunk in circumstances shrouded in a secrecy that will not be lifted until the 100 year embargo placed is lifted in 2040. Only 39 of the over 1500 crew survived the sinking of the Glorious by the battle cruisers Gneisenau and Scharnhorst. Around 25% of Sydney's entry at Halton training for FAA were lost.

After his service he became a teacher and held posts in Castlewellan and Dunluce. He took up sailing in Mirror dinghies at first. In retirement he joined Cockle Island boat club as a member of 'the Wrinklies'. In that club he had an active social life and made many good friends. He gave up sailing in 2008 at the tender age of 87.

When he was aged 92 he received his Arctic Star awarded for service North of the Arctic Circle. Though born in Manchester, Sydney Waller lived in Northern Ireland for over 60 years. It is a place he visited frequently as a young child from the later 20s. His father, a joiner with the LMS Railway, was a keen sea angler and each summer used his railway holiday pass to take his family to Northern Ireland by the LMS steamer from Heysham and onwards to Portrush on the LMS NCC (Northern Counties Committee) Railway from York Road. He was husband to Nora nee Gregg of Portrush whom he met in childhood and later married.

Well known artist died in Belfast Blitz while serving in Royal Navy in HMS Caroline

Able Seaman Frank Mundy Coombs (D/JX 171434) served in the Royal Navy during World War Two. Born on 30th July 1906, he was the son of Frank Coombs and Louisa Isabel Coombs of Bath, Somerset.

Coombs received his art education at King's School, Bruton under Arthur Jenkins. Before the outbreak of war, he was well-known as a painter, architect, and art dealer. He qualified as an architect and worked for Hampshire County Council before moving to the island of Sark. There he met art dealer Ala Storey who owned the Storran Gallery in London. After her vacation ended, Frank returned to London with her and began to work at the Storran.

Coombs' progressive shows changed the entire business of the gallery, which once sold woodcuts and greeting cards. Soon, working with Eardley Knollys, the Storran exhibited works by Pavel Tchelitchew, Ivon Hitchens, Francis Hodgkins, and Victor Pasmore. Ala Storey sold her share of the gallery to Knollys for £300. They continued to exhibit works by Pablo Pcaso, Amedeo Modigliani, Maurice Utrillom, Glyn Philpot, Claude Monet, Pierre-Auguste Renoir, Paul Gaugin, Maurice de Vlaminck, and André Derain. Under Coombs and his partner Knollys, the Storran Gallery became an important avant-garde gallery.

In 1940, Coombs' work was part of a London Group Special Wartime Show at the New Burlington Galleries.

It was evident that all the young people of what, before the war, was coming to be known humorously as the Cork Street Front, are carrying on energetically, courageously, and what is more important, with no loss of artistic integrity. There were characteristic works by Eileen Agar and Edna

Ginesi, by John Tunnard, Ivon Hitchens, Robert Medley, Frank Mundy Coombs and many others of the younger generation.

Thomas McGreevy, The Studio – 1940.

After the outbreak of WW2 Frank Mundy Coombs joined the Royal Navy. He eventually became an Able Seaman and served on board HMS Caroline, in Belfast.

He died on 15th April 1941 aged 34 years old. On that night, the Luftwaffe launched a devastating attack on the city. It would become known as The Easter Raid of the Belfast Blitz. Over 900 residents of Belfast died in that single night.

Frank Mundy Coombs' grave is in Glenalina Extension, Section D, Grave 128 of Belfast City Cemetery.

His headstone bears the inscription:

Killed by enemy action. Eldest son of Frank and Louisa Coombs of Radstock, Somerset.

After the death of Coombs, his partner Eardley Knollys was heartbroken and never reopened the Storrán Gallery.

On this Day – April 15

1940

British unemployment falls to 973,000, lowest figure since 1920.

British troops land at Harstad in the Lofoten Islands, opposite Narvik.

Quisling government resigns in Oslo and a 'Administrative Council' takes control.

1940

Germans appoint a council to run the Norwegian government.

Off Narvik, British

destroyers Brazen and Fearless sink U-49; documents about the Enigma machine float to the surface and are captured by the British

1941

The Luftwaffe bombs Belfast, Northern Ireland, killing 758. The Germans take Sarajevo, Yugoslavia. Igor Sikorsky flies first official rotor helicopter flight, of a Vought-Sikorsky VS-300 in Stratford, CT; flight lasts over one hour.

1942

During its darkest hours, the Malta is awarded the George Cross for "heroism and devotion" by King George VI. This was in recognition of the way in which the Maltese people had stood up to more than 2,000 bombing raids and constant shortages over the past twelve month

The French resistance attacks the German HQ at Arras with hand grenades.

1943

General Omar Bradley takes command of US II Corps; Patton relieved to prepare for invasion of Sicily.

1944

38 Irish Brigade. North of Cassino: “Intentions during night: usual patrolling. 2 LIR had 3 men wounded from mortaring at 0100hrs. Patrols made no contact during night. Intermittent harassing fire during night. 6 Innisks’ forward positions were harassed by MG fire in the night.”

The Red Army recaptures Tarnopol in the southern Ukraine.

1945

The 3rd Ukrainian front occupies Radkesburg during its offensive against the industrial area of Mährisch-Ostrau in Moravia. The 2nd Ukrainian front attacks towards Brno in Czechoslovakia.

British troops liberate Bergen-Belsen Concentration Camp and free approximately 40,000 prisoners. It is reported that “both inside and outside the huts was a carpet of dead bodies, human excreta, rags and filth.”

The Canadian First Army reaches the coast in northern Holland and captures Arnhem in the South. The US First Army captures Leuna and Merseburg in Saxony, while the French First Army captures Kehl and Offenburg on the upper Rhine.



Roll of Honour – April 15

*Representing their comrades who died on
this day*

1915

+GRACEY, J

Royal Irish Rifles. 2nd Btn. Rifleman. 4969. Died 15/04/1915. Age 19. Son of Isabella Gracey, of 1, Florence Court, Edenderry, Portadown, Co. Armagh, and the late W. J. Gracey. Voormezele Enclosure No 3, Belgium

+GRAY/STEWART, James,

Connaught Rangers. 1st Bn. Private. 9499. Died 15/04/1915. Aged 30. (served as Gray). Son of William and Anne Stewart, of Pontna, Kilrea, Co. Derry. Chosques Military Cemetery, Pas de Calais, France

+LANYON, William Mortimer

Royal Irish Rifles. 5th Btn. Captain. Died 15/04/1915. He entered the Rifles' trench about midnight on Easter Sunday and early the following morning, as he was standing against the parapet, he was hit in the head by a sniper's bullet, and killed instantly. Shortly before his death he was Adjutant of the 5th R.I.R. Son of Mr. and Mrs. H. O. Lanyon; husband to Helen Baird (formerly Lanyon, nee Blizzard), c/o The



Sunset on the Somme

Westminster Bank, Canterbury. His wife and their two young children lived at The Villas, Downpatrick.

+O'NEILL, Joseph

Royal Irish Rifles, 1st Btn. Rifleman. 8951. Died 15/04/1915. Joseph O'Neill was born in Derry. He lived for a time in Maghera. Joseph enlisted at Belfast. Joseph's wife and child lived at 47 Trafalgar Street, Belfast, There is also another address listed in Belfast, 11 Wansbeck Street. Joseph O'Neill's sister lived at 23 Jamaica Street, Belfast. Saily-Sur-La-Lys Churchyard, Pas de Calais, France

+STEWART, James

Connaught Rangers, 1st Btn. Private. 9499. Died 15/04/1915. Aged 30. Son of William and Anne Stewart, of Pontna, Kilrea, Co. Derry. James Stewart enlisted at Coatbridge in Lanarkshire, Scotland. He was living in Kilrea

at the time. He enlisted under the name James Gray. No 9499. Chocques Military Cemetery, Pas de Calais, France

1916

+DILLON, Joseph

Royal Irish Rifles, 2nd Btn. Rifleman. 8818. Died 15/04/1916. Age 33. Son of Joseph Dillon, of Belfast; husband of Frances Annie Dillon, of 127, Sidney St. West, Belfast. Ecoivres Military Cemetery, Mont-St-Eloi, France

+McCARTER, Robert

Royal Irish Rifles, 18th Btn. Serjeant. 11/18129. Died 15/04/1916. Age 43. Husband to Mary Anne McCarter, of 52, Hill St., Lisburn. Lisburn Cemetery

1917

+LIVINGSTON, W M

Royal Irish Fusiliers, 6th Btn. Lieutenant. Died 15/04/1917. Links with Lurgan. Aubigny Communal Cemetery Extension, Pas de Calais, France

+THOMPSON, James

Royal Irish Regiment, 1st Garrison Btn. Private. 5576. Died 15/04/1917. James Thompson was born about 1881 in Kilrea. He was serving with the 1st Garrison Battalion of the RIR when he died at sea. His unit was travelling to the eastern theatres of war, Salonika and Palestine, and were on board the troop ship SS Arcadian in the Mediterranean. It had left Salonika headed for Egypt when it encountered an enemy submarine. It was torpedoed and the ship sank. In his will, he left all to his grandmother, Mrs Jane McCotter,

who was living at Castle Street in Ballymoney. Son of Mrs. Jamieson (formerly Thompson), of Craghuller, Cloyfin, Coleraine. Mikra Memorial, Greece

+VAUGHAN, Edwin Henry

Royal Irish Fusiliers, 1st Btn. Private. 9332. Died 15/04/1917. Age 29. Son of Edwin Henry and Margaret Vaughan, of 77, Nutbeem Rd., Eastleigh, Hants; husband to Isabella Vaughan, of 34, Lonsdale St., Armagh. Aubingy Communal Cemetery Extension, France

1918

+BROWNE, Bernard Score

Royal Army Medical Corps, attd. 2nd Bn. Cheshire Regiment. Captain. M C. MiD. Died 15/04/1918. Aged 32. Second son of Col. A. Walker Browne (late R.A.M.C.) and Mrs. Browne. Bernard was born about 1884. His father was the principal medical officer of the North Irish Coast Defences. Bernard was educated at Portora Royal School, Enniskillen. He then moved on to Edinburgh University, where he qualified M.B., Ch.B. in 1908. Shortly afterwards he took up medical missionary work in China. Bernard Browne returned home as soon as he could and took a temporary commission as lieutenant in the Royal Army Medical Corps on 02/04/1915. Bernard then became the medical officer of the 2nd Battalion of the Cheshire Regiment in France. Bernard Browne was promoted to captain after a year's service. Bernard was awarded the Military Cross. He was mentioned in dispatches by Lord French. He was subsequently stationed at Salonika in Greece where he was killed in action. Doiran Memorial

stands near Doiran Military Cemetery, Greece. Dungannon War Memorial

+CAMPBELL, Robert Blair

Royal Irish Rifles, 12th Btn. Rifleman. 14159. Died 15/04/1918. Age 22. Born 25/02/1896 at 17 Mornington Street, Belfast to William James and Maggie Blair Campbell, nee Blair. At the time of his death his parents were residing at 222, Upper Meadow Street, Belfast. Tyne Cot Memorial, Belgium. Duncairn Presbyterian Church, Antrim Road, Belfast



Ulster Tower and Mill Cemetery seen from the air. The Cemetery was constructed over the Schwaben Redoubt, a German strong point overrun by the 36th Ulster Division. Many of the stones are laid flat due to subsidence. There are 1304 burials, 815 unknown.

+CONNOLLY, Archibald

Royal Irish Rifles, 12th. Btn. Rifleman. 763. Died 15/04/1918. Age 23. Seapatricks Parish Church RH, Banbridge

+COWAN, Albert William

Royal Irish Rifles, 12th. Btn. Corporal. 17484. Died 15/04/1918. Born and lived in Lisburn. Before the war he was an apprentice caulker at Queen's Island. He volunteered in September 1914 and enlisted at Lisburn, in 11 RIR, embarking with them for France, from Bordon, in October 1915. Involved in the fighting on the Somme on the 01/07/1916 and at Messines in early June 1917 he came through both engagements without serious injury. However, he was wounded during the fighting at Langemarck in Belgium on the 16/08/1917 which resulted in a prolonged convalescence. Subsequently transferred to 12 RIR (17484), he returned to the front on Good Friday 1918 and was KIA in Belgium two weeks later. His death is commemorated on the Tyne Cot Memorial, Belgium, panels 138-140. He was the youngest son of Joseph Cowan of 3 Wallace Avenue, Lisburn and brother of Stephen Cowan who by 1920 was living in Toronto, Canada. Tyne Cot Memorial, Belgium, panels 138-140.

+CROSBIE, Thomas Edward Chapman

Royal Irish Fusiliers (Princess Victoria's), 9th Btn. Captain. MC+Bar Wounded and died 15/04/1918 at dressing station near Kemmel. Aged 20. Educated at Lurgan College then Queens University Belfast (Studying) Medicine. He was a cadet (23653) in the 10th Royal Irish Fusiliers and a

member of the Officers Training Corps. On 05/01/1916 he joined the 7th Officer Cadet Battalion. On 19/12/1916 he was commissioned to the 9th Royal Irish Fusiliers (Princess Victoria's) 36th Ulster Division. Awarded MC 03/11/1917 for Gallantry in action during a raid near Havrincourt , Commanded (C) company November 1917 - April 1918. Awarded a bar to MC for Conspicuous Gallantry and Devotion 21/03/1918 (St Quentin). Wounded at Regent Street Dugouts north of Wulverghem 15/04/1918 and died later that night. Initially buried in a field grave lost some how. Born 30/05/1897. Eldest son of Francis Edward & Elizabeth (Chapman) Crosbie, Mahon House Portadown, Co Armagh. Tyne Cot Memorial for the missing. Portadown WM. 1st Portadown Presbyterian Church (Edenderry) WM. Lurgan College RH. Queens University Officer Training Corps memorial RH. QUB WM. (Portadown News 27/04/1918, 04/05/1918)

+DUNWOODY, Thomas

Royal Irish Rifles, 12th Btn. Rifleman. 692. Died 15/04/1918. Husband to Mrs. Aggie Dunwoody, of Fredrick St., Killyleigh. Tyne Cot Memorial, Belgium

+GRAY, Robert John

Royal Irish Rifles, 12th. Btn. 17679. Died 15/04/1918. Born in Lisburn where he lived, he enlisted in the town and served in 11 RIR, embarking with them for France from Bordon in October 1915. Son of John Gray of Wilson Street, Low Road, Lisburn and formerly of Tullynacross. Tyne Cot Memorial, Belgium

+HARDY, Harold

Royal Irish Rifles. 13th Btn. att'd. 12th Btn. Captain. Died 15/04/1918. Age 33. Born on 24/05/1885 at Thornleigh, Clondeboye. A son of Thomas Lee Hardy and Elizabeth Hardy (nee Campbell) who were married on 13/04/1882 in St Thomas's C of I Parish Church, Belfast. The Hardy family lived in the townland of Ballygrot, Bangor and at *Carramore*, Helen's Bay. Thomas Lee Hardy was a linen manufacturer and he and Elizabeth had five children. Harold Hardy worked as a warehouse clerk before the outbreak of WW1 and he played rugby football. He enlisted and served with the 13th Battalion Royal Irish Rifles in 108th Brigade of the 36th (Ulster) Division. In November 1917 the 11th and 13th Battalions were amalgamated and then disbanded in February 1918 with troops moving to other Battalions. Bangor and District WM. Royal British Legion (Bangor Branch) Memorial Plaque. North of Ireland Cricket Club Memorial Plaque. Glencraig C of I Parish Church (Holy Trinity) RH. Helen's Bay C of I Parish Church (St John Baptist) RH. Family grave headstone in Belfast City Cemetery

+HUDSON, William

Royal Irish Rifles. 12th Btn. Rifleman. 14797. Died 15/04/1918. Age 27. Born in the Steeple area of Antrim. His surname at birth was registered as Huddleston. Lived in Holywood. Son of Robert and Mrs. N. Hudson, of 69, Sandown Rd., Belfast; husband to Mrs. M. Hudson (nee Dunne), of Hibernia Cottage, Holywood, Co. Down. They married in St Columba's C of I Church in Knock, Belfast in 27/11/1912. When their daughter was born in 1913, William

was working as a riveter in Harland & Wolff (Queen's Island). He and Mary had at least three children. William Hudson enlisted in Belfast and he served with the 8th Battalion Royal Irish Rifles. In August 1917 the 8th and 9th Battalions were amalgamated and in February 1918 they were disbanded in France. William was transferred to the 12th Battalion Royal Irish Rifles in 108th Brigade of the 36th (Ulster) Division. He died in action during the German Spring Offensive. Tyne Cot Memorial, Belgium. Holywood & District WM. Holywood Non-Subscribing Church, Holywood RH. Ormiston (now Kirkpatrick Memorial) Presbyterian Church RH. Harland & Wolff (Queen's Island) War Memorial

+KENNEDY, David

Royal Irish Rifles, 12th Btn. Rifleman. 1077. Died 15/04/1918. Tyne Cot Memorial, Belgium

+McCLEAN, William

Royal Irish Rifles, 12th Btn. Rifleman. 19654. Died 15/04/1918. He was born at Ballycowan, Kells on the 17 October 1891 and he lived in Kells village. He was the son of Samuel McClean and Matilda Swan, Kells. The couple had married in 1st Ballymena Presbyterian Church on the 12/07/1890. Members of the family were involved in the factory production of woollen cloth. There were two children of the marriage, William and Rachel. Sometimes the surname is spelt McLean, birth recorded as McClain. Tyne Cot Memorial, Belgium. Kells Presbyterian Church RH.

+McVEIGH, John

Royal Garrison Artillery, 330th Siege Bty. Gunner. 139483. Died 15/04/1918. Age 23. When he enlisted in December

1916 he was living at Patrick St., Armagh. Son of Hugh and May A. McVeigh, of 56, Curran St., Portadown. St Pierre Cemetery, Amiens, France. Armagh WM

+MILLAR, David George

Royal Irish Rifles, 12th Btn. Lance Corporal. 1474. Died 15/04/1918. Age 18. Born Shane's Castle Park, Drummaul on 31/05/1899. He lived in Randalstown. Son of William and Catherine (Kathleen) Millar of `Bailey Cottage, Randalstown. Tyne Cot Memorial, Belgium

+QUAIL, James Henry

Royal Irish Rifles. 12th Btn. Lance Corporal. 1791. Died 15/04/1918. Age 19. Born on 21/12/1898 in Mullnamoy, Co Monaghan. Son of Hugh Alexander and Josephine Quail (nee Ormsby) who were married on 17/09/1891 in Ballina Roman Catholic Church. Hugh Alexander Quail (born in County Down) worked as a bank official (Bank of Ireland, stationed for a time in Newtownards) and he and Josephine had at least five children. The Quail family lived at 2 Regent Street, Newtownards. James Henry Quail enlisted at Clandeboye in July 1917 and he trained with the 18th Battalion Royal Irish Rifles. He went to France on 29/03/1918. Less than three weeks later he was killed in action on 15/04/1918 at Messines while holding the line during the German Spring Offensive. Initially he was reported as missing in action; he was last seen 'in a shell-hole near Messines, where he held out to the last moment, firing on the enemy who had practically surrounded the position'. In January 1919, the Quail family appealed for information about him from any returning soldiers who had survived the battle. Later it was officially confirmed that

Henry must be presumed to have been killed in action. He was 19 when he died and he has no known grave. At the time that Henry Quail died, both of his brothers were recovering from severe wounds. Private David Quail served with the Canadians and Second Lieutenant Hugh Herbert Quail served with the Tank Corps. Son of Hugh and Josephine Quail, of Bank of Ireland House, Newtownards. Tyne Cot Memorial, Belgium. Newtownards and District WM

+SMITH, Cecil

Royal Irish Rifles. 12th Btn. Lance Corporal. 69. Died 15/04/1918. Age 18. Son of Mr. G. N. Smith and Mrs. H. Smith, of Daisy Hill, Newry. Tyne Cot Memorial, Belgium

+TATE, James

Royal Irish Rifles. 12th Btn. Serjeant. 19953. Died 15/04/1918. Age 27. Son of Mrs. Charlotte Tate, of 79, Young St., Lisburn. Tyne Cot Memorial, Belgium

+WARING, Holt

Royal Irish Rifles. 13th Btn. attd. 12th Btn. Died 15/04/1918. Age 41. Husband of Margaret Waring, of Waringstown. Wulberghem-Lindenhoek Road Military Cemetery, Belgium

+WILSON, James

Royal Army Medical Corps. Quartermaster Serjeant. 41311. Died 15/04/1918. Age 60. He enlisted in 1914 and was CQMS with 110th Field Ambulance, 36th (Ulster) Division. Discharged in October 1917 due to sickness and died at

home. Husband of Sarah Wilson, of Belfast. Dundonald Cemetery, Belfast

1919

+CAIRNS, J

Labour Corps, 33rd Prisoner of War Coy. Private. 572648. Died 15/04/1919. Age 40. Son of Mrs. Mary Cairns; husband of Martha Cairns, of 33, Wall St., Belfast. Mazargues War Cemetery, Marseilles, France

+LYNESS, Benjamin

Royal Irish Rifles, 1st Garrison Btn. Rifleman. G/654. 15/04/1919. Age 37 years old. Son of William and Mary Lyness (nee O'Brien); husband to Mary Lyness (nee McGrath). Lisburn Cemetery

1941

+BURLEIGH, Betty

Auxiliary Territorial Service, Volunteer. W/39496. Died between 15/04/1941 and 16/04/1941. Age 21. Daughter of William and Mary Burleigh, of Florencecourt. Killesher Chrch of Ireland Churchyard

Belfast Blitz service fatalities

+ASH, Stanley G

Royal Navy. Steward. P/SR56933. Died 05/05/1941. Aged 22. HMS La Malouine. Son of Florence Hatch, of Trumpington, Cambridge. Belfast City Cemetery, Glenalina

+BROWN, Henry

RN. Stoker 1st Class. D/KX 117314. HMS Caroline. Died 16/04/1941, aged 54. Died during German Air Raid. Husband to Georgina Brown of Burke Street, Belfast. Belfast City Cemetery. Glenalina

Fatality in an air raid on Belfast.

+BROWNE, William Thomas

RAF. Sergeant. 527866. Died 15/04/1941. Aged 25. Died during German air raid on Belfast whilst he was home on leave. The bombs destroyed most of the street. Son of William Thomas and Annie Elizabeth Browne of 22 Walton Street, Belfast. Belfast City Cemetery, Glenalina

+COOMBS, Frank Mundy

Royal Navy. Able Seaman. D/JX 171434. Died 15/04/1941. Aged 34. HMS Caroline. Son of Frank and Louisa Isabel Coombs, of Bath, Somerset. Belfast City Cemetery, Glenalina

+CORRY, Samuel

RN. AB. D/SSX 17718. HMS Quebec. Died on 16/04/1941. Aged 26. HMS Quebec. German Air Raid. Husband to Martha Corry of Belfast, who died In the same incident. Belfast City Cemetery, Glenalina Section

+DOLAN, Victor Frank Douglas

Royal Navy. Able Seaman. P/JX 142717. Died 20/06/1941. Aged 21. HMS Pegasus . Son of Mrs. I. Dolan, of Southsea, Hampshire. Belfast City Cemetery, Glenalina

+KINGSTON, Ronald Victor

General List. Captain.115422. Died between 15/04/1941 and 16/04/1941. Aged 28. Son of Thomas Kingston and of Lucy Charlotte Kingston (nee Sprigge), of Wandsworth, London. Liveryman of the Vintners Company. Belfast City Cemetery, Glenalina

+MARASI, Felix

Pioneer Corps. Private. 13058655. Died 05/05/1941. Aged 25. Son of Felix and Margherita Marasi. Belfast City Cemetery, Glenalina

+PHILLIPS, Henry

Royal Ulster Rifles. 6th Bn. Warrant Officer Class I (R.S.M.). 7006718. Died 16/04/1941. Belfast City Cemetery, Glenalina

+PICKUP, Harry Norman

Pioneer Corps. Lance Corporal.13058709. Died 05/05/1941. Aged 22. Son of Henry S. Pickup and Janet S. Pickup, of Pinner, Middlesex. Belfast City Cemetery, Glenalina

+TAYLOR, James

Royal Navy.Ordinary Seaman. P/JX181288. MiD. Died 05/05/1941. Aged 23. HMS La Malouine. Son of Edward

and Annie Taylor, of Bristols Hope, Newfoundland. Belfast City Cemetery, Glenalina

1943

+HENRY, Isaac

Royal Irish Fusiliers, 1st Btn. Fusilier. 7047221. Died 16/04/1943. Aged 32. He was born on 05/07/1910 at Magheraglass, Cookstown. He was one of at least nine children. Prior to joining the army he was a steel erector. He went to live in Coventry with his wife, Margaret. Isaac Henry was conscripted in 1940. Son of Robert and Annie Henry, of Cookstown, Co. Tyrone; husband to Margaret Henry, of Cookstown. Medjez-el-Bab War Cemetery, Tunisia.
Cookstown WM

+MASON, Francis Joseph

RAFVR. Aircraftman 2nd Class. 1099357. Died 15/04/1943. Aged 22. Son of William and Isabella Mason of 7 Glenview Street, Londonderry. Londonderry City Cemetery

1944

+McFEETERS, Samuel

Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, 2nd Btn. Lance Corporal. 6985219. Died 15/04/1944. Age 22. Son of Mr. and Mrs. James McFeeters, of Londonderry; husband to Kathleen McFeeters; nephew of Mrs. M. McFeeters, of Londonderry. Beach Head War Cemetery, Anzio, Italy

+PACKER, Harold John

Wiltshire Regiment, 1st Btn. Private. 5575623. Died 15/04/1944. Age 31. Son of Joseph Packer, and of Edith

Louisa Packer, of Ballysillan, Co. Antrim. Taukkyan War Cemetery, Myanmar

1945

+McNEILLY, John Henry

Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers. Fusilier. 7013054. Died 15/04/1945. Age 25. Son of Thomas McNeilly, and of Mary Ann McNeilly (nee Salmon), of Crossgar. St Mary's Roman Catholic Cemetery, Killyleagh.

VETERANS

CALDWELL, Matthew Fitzjames

Surgeon Lieutenant Commander. MB BCh BAO, QUB 1907. B 15/04/1883. Son of James Caldwell, Mont Cecil, Bloomfield, Belfast. D. Campbell College 547

LEISHMAN, John McMillan

John was born in Falkirk in 1920 and served in the 153rd Infantry Brigade, 51st Highland Division. He later made his home in Belfast where he died on 15/04/2015.

On 03/09/1939, he joined the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders at Sterling Castle.

During World War Two, he spent time based throughout Co. Down.

- Moira: July 1940 to November 1940.
- Lisburn: November 1940 to May 1941.
- Waringstown and Donacloney: May 1941 to 1942. •
While based in Moira, his regiment attended services at

St. John's Parish Church. There, he met a local woman Florence Lennon who sang in the church choir.

John remembered thinking "that would be the perfect wife for me".

They couple became engaged in October 1940 and married in July 1941. On his release from the army in 1946, they settled in the Co. Down village. John and Florence remained together for almost 67 years having two children, Yvette and John.

- **D-Day, 6th June 1944**

On 06/06/1944, Leishman landed on Sword Beach. His division was part of the support group for the front line troops. By D-Day, he had survived other battles and escaped the horror of Dunkirk on board a small fishing boat in 1940.

- In the following four years, he fought in many battles including the Battle of El Alamein. In October 1942, he fought alongside Montgomery and the 8th Army 'Desert Rats'.

Sergeant Leishman returns to Normandy

"When I visited last year, I saw a long stretch of golden sand with a promenade alongside; a perfect holiday destination far removed from what it was on D-Day." -John Leishman on visiting Sword Beach in 2013

Leishman was lucky to even make it to the beachhead on D-Day. As a troop who couldn't swim, he had to rely on

support from two of his comrades in the water as they left the landing craft.

Many veterans do not like to dwell on their experiences. Belfast's John Leishman was not one of them. At the age of 90, he visited Lisburn joining Rev Paul Dundas and Rev John Pickering at Christ Church. Over a coffee, he reminisced that he was once billeted in the Nicholson Memorial Hall adjoining the church.

Two years later, he met Queen Elizabeth II during her historic visit to Belfast. John reminded her that she had once changed the spark plugs on his car. The young princess had worked in the auxiliary territorial service at the time.

In 2013, he revisited Normandy on a battlefield tour with Omagh District Orange Cultural Association. John Leishman and George Thompson accompanied the group of ten on their visit. They first traveled from Paris and onto Caen.

They stopped at the British landing zones by the River Orne, the Merville Battery, and Ranville Cemetery. The two veterans also visited Pegasus Bridge, calling into Café Gondrée and regaling customers with stories and songs. There, they were given a warm welcome by Madame Gondrée who had been a little girl when France was liberated in 1944.

The following year, John also attended the D-Day 70th-anniversary commemorations in Normandy in 2014 at the age of 94.

Remembering John Leishman

After his wife's death in 2008, John Leishman lived in Dundonald, East Belfast. There, he attended St. Mary's Church on the Ballybeen Estate.

John passed away in hospital on Wednesday 15th April 2015. His funeral took place at St. Mary's Parish Church, Craigleith Drive, Dundonald at 1100hrs on Friday 17th April. The service was followed by burial in Moira Parish Churchyard. First Minister at the time, Peter Robinson, described John as "a true hero and gentleman".

MALLOY, Thomas Robert

WW2. RAFVR W/Cdr(M). MiD. MB 1941 QUB. FRCPsych. MCB. Born 15/04/1917. Son of Robert Malloy, Jordanstown. Postwar Manchester

**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

houstonmckelvey@mac.com

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

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+COOKE, Kyriss Fay

WRNS. Rating. Died as a result of an accident on active service. Com. 1942
QUB