



remembrance ni



Jerrettspass Flight Sergeant in fatal crash in Equatorial Guinea

John Joe Duffy (right front above) was born in Lissummon, Jerrettspass on 27th November 1916, the

eldest of the four children of James and Bridget Duffy. He was educated at Lissummon Primary School and, while still in his teens, went to find work in England.

There he worked as a landscape gardener, eventually setting up in business on his own. On Boxing Day 1939 he married Dorothy (Dorrie) Dalaston and they set up home at Rugby in Warwickshire. The following December, he enlisted in the R.A.F. He was trained as a wireless operator and air gunner before being assigned to Coastal Command. In February 1941 his son Roger was born and, shortly thereafter, Dorrie and their baby son came to Lissummon to live with John Joe's mother for the duration of the war.

During the next three years he saw a great deal of action. He served in the Far East and was awarded 'The Burma Star' and with Coastal Command took part in numerous missions in the Sunderland Flying boats. Throughout his time in the RAF, it seems that the crew, of which he was a member, remained largely unchanged and a great bond of friendship grew between them. In 1943 their plane came down in the sea, off Portugal, whether through mechanical failure or enemy action is not clear. Although they suffered injuries all were rescued and in time recommenced their service. On December 21st 1943, possibly from hospital, he wrote the following to his mother.

"Dear Mother,
I was very pleased to hear from you and Mary yesterday. Was sorry to hear you were all so upset about me but don't worry mother, I'm feeling tip-top again. I feel a lot better now that I've got my letters coming through. It took them quite a

while to catch up with me.

I had to know you are all well at home and that you all like Dorrie and Roger. Thanks a million, mother, for having a Mass said for me also prayed for. It has meant a lot to me. I was glad to hear Tom Savage was enquiring about me. I shall be very pleased to hear from him. Give my kind regards to all at home. I hope to see you all very soon. God bless you all.

Your loving son
John Joe.”

In April 1944, Dorrie gave birth to their daughter Marlene. John Joe was given compassionate leave and spent some time back home in Lissummon with his family before returning to his squadron.

Shortly thereafter the family learned, much to their relief that his crew were to be posted to East Africa, as this was largely out of the main war zone. While the reason for the posting is not known, it was seen as a reward for a crew who had, together, come through so much in the previous three years.

Dorrie, with Roger and Marlene

In order to avoid flying over mainland Europe and North East Africa, the flight path they were directed to take was that they follow the west coast of Africa, south to Nigeria, before heading east across the continent to their destination in Uganda. However they were never to make it, for while crossing the Gulf of Guinea, they flew into a very severe tropical storm, which caused their plane to crash-land on the little island of Fernando Po. There were no survivors.

Fernando Po was then part of Spanish Guinea. (Today the island is called Bioko).

The family were informed of the loss but had no other details. The 'Tom Savage' referred to in John Joe's letter to his mother had become a priest and, in her distress, in an attempt to find out details what had become of her son, Mrs Duffy turned to Tom Savage for help.

Fr Savage recalled what had happened at the time:

"Early in 1944, I was sent to a parish in Edinburgh and while there I received a letter from Mrs Duffy telling me the sad news of John Joe's death and asking if I could do something about finding out about it. I discovered where Fernando Po Island was, and that it was part of Spanish Guinea and that the language spoken there was Spanish. One of my duties in Edinburgh was to attend prisoners in the prison and as it happened there was a Spaniard there. With his help, I wrote a letter and addressed it to 'The Parish Priest, Fernando Po Island, Spanish Guinea.' I thought I would never hear of it and that I might as well have written to 'The Parish Priest, America!' but lo and behold, two months later a letter duly arrived from 'The Parish Priest of Fernando Po.'"

The Duffy family have treasured the quaintly worded letter all these years

It reads:

"The reference you received concerning your friend Mr Duffy is true by misfortune. The storm that broke when an English aeroplane was flying over this island caused it to fall down dying in the same instant the men (about ten) that were in it, except the one that was the cook who survived for an hour and by him we learnt certain details of the plane. There was

nobody near the place where this catastrophe took place in this stage it was not possible to give these unfortunate men spiritual assistance....

Judging your well known Mr Duffy that he took in the main trip of his journey he was a good Christian; among said documents we found one that assures he had fulfilled with parish cathedral of Lagos confessing and receiving Holy Communion for the Easter. Moreover he took there crucifixions, some medals and one prayer book....

..... Knowing the undersigned all these details and wanting to give more embossment to the event being that it was treating of a catholic so excellent denote all his documents I ordered the Rev Fr Parson of the cathedral to display all his items for the burial of the late Mr Duffy and was done according to my orders..... The ceremony was very solemn and grand it has been few in this capital.... After the ceremony was done... they were carried to the cemetery by the great multitude.... You may be tranquil trusting that our heavenly father in his infinite mercy has reserved a place for him in heaven....”(sic.) In May a letter from the Squadron Leader arrived containing John Joe’s gold wedding ring. A letter from the Air Ministry later in the year gave more details of the funeral and enclosed photographs of the funeral in Santa Isabel (the capital of Fernando Po):

The funeral of John Joe Duffy in Santa Isabel, Fernando Po Island

“ The funeral was conducted by a Roman Catholic priest and two Methodist Ministers, as no Church of England priest



could be found. The cortege (above) formed up outside the cathedral and proceeded to the cemetery. The pallbearers were all British Africans and military honours were accorded by a detachment of Marines. Wreaths were received from the Spanish Guinea Government, various government departments, British Africans, a number of business houses, the British Consulate and from the African Staff of the Consulate. Each wreath was inscribed 'In honoured memory of a member of the Royal Air Force.' The town council of Santa Isabel has ceded, to His Majesty's Government, the land in the cemetery where your husband and his comrades lie."

A few years ago, a nephew of John Joe's was able to visit Santa Isabel on Fernando Po. (Santa Isabel is now known

as 'Malabo') The graves of his uncle and the other crew members are perfectly kept.

See entry in today's Roll of Honour.

On this Day – June 3



1940

All aliens and stateless persons living in Britain are forbidden to leave home between 10:30 pm and 6 am.

Churchill orders the setting up of commando forces to be used for raiding occupied Europe.

The last night of the Dunkirk evacuation sees 26,700 French soldiers lifted from the beaches. This brings the total rescued to 224,686

British, 121,445 French and Belgian troops. Most of the French opt to return to France to continue the fight. During the evacuation, 177 aircraft were lost (Germans lost 140 aircraft).

Admiralty announce the loss of six destroyers, 24 small warships and participation of 222 British naval vessels and 665 other craft in Dunkirk operation. 226 vessels are sunk altogether.

300 German planes bomb Paris inflicting around 900 casualties.

British and French forces start to evacuate from Narvik in northern Norway.

1941

Attlee memorandum approved 2,430,000 to 19,000 at Labour Party conference: 'A necessary prelude to a just peace is a total victory.'

Ex-Kaiser Wilhelm II, dies in exile in Holland.

New Iraqi government is formed.

1942

Task Force 16 (Spruance) and 17 (Fletcher) meet 350 miles north-east of Midway. Admiral Fletcher takes overall command of the joint task force, although the two would act separately.

US land based aircraft from Midway spot the Japanese Transport Force about 600 miles from Midway. They launch attacks against this force, but without success.

US reconnaissance aircraft spot the 2 carriers of the Japanese 2nd Carrier Striking Force, which were about 400 miles from Kiska in the Aleutians.

1943

The first fruits of victory reach British shops, Algerian wine.

1944

Hitler allows Kesselring to withdraw from Rome, which has now been declared an 'Open City'.

The Japanese rearguard at Kohima retreats, ending a 64 day battle.

Roll of Honour – June 3

Representing their comrades who died on this day

1915

+GRAY, John

Royal Marine Light Infantry, Royal Naval Brigade, Chatham Battalion. Private. CH/298(S). Died 03/06/1915 in hospital in Alexandria, Egypt, of wounds received at the Dardanelles. Aged about 29. Son of James and Sarah Gray, Burnside, Portstewart. Before the War he was employed as a tailor in Belfast. Alexandria (Chatby) Military and War Memorial Cemetery, Egypt. Portstewart WM, Agherton Parish Church WM, PCI RH, IWMR

1916

+ALEXANDER, Robert Campbell

Canadian Infantry. 7th Btn. (British Columbia Regiment). Lance Corporal. 7708. Died 03/06/1916. Age 31. Born on 16/05/1885 at 214 Renwick Place, Belfast; at attestation he declared that he was born on 16/05/1886. Only son of

James Kane Alexander and Elizabeth Rebecca Alexander (nee Logan, born in Gortin, Co Tyrone) who were married on 23/06/1880 in Fitzroy Avenue Presbyterian Church Belfast. J K Alexander of 68 Nelson Street, Belfast was a 'Chief Officer of Ship'. Elizabeth Logan was from 183 Sandy Row, Belfast. James and Elizabeth (nee Logan) Alexander had four children. Their father James died sometime before 1901. Their mother Elizabeth lived in at least four different addresses in Belfast, and in at least one address in Holywood: 4 Roland Place.

Robert Campbell Alexander attended Sullivan Upper School in Holywood and in 1901, aged 15, he worked as a shopkeeper's clerk. Around 1907, aged 21, he moved to Canada where he spent six years in Vancouver and three in Victoria, British Columbia working as a surveyor. He enlisted on 10/11/1914 in Victoria and it was noted in his attestation papers that he was 5 feet 9 inches tall with a dark complexion, blue eyes and brown hair. In June 1916 the death of Robert Campbell Alexander was reported in the *Newtownards Chronicle*. The report stated that Lance Corporal Robert Campbell Alexander was wounded in May 1915, he returned to active service and died on 03/06/1916 during an Allied advance when he was killed by enemy machine-gun fire. Ypres (Menin Gate) Memorial, Belgium. Holywood and District WM. Memorial. St Philip & St James C of I Parish Church Holywood RH

+BREEN, Robert Alexander

Royal Irish Rifles. 7th Btn. Rifleman. 5767. Died 03/06/1916. Aged 18. Son of Sarah McCormick, of 87, Glenwood St., Belfast. Dud Corner Cemetery, Loos. Pas de Calais, France

+HETHERINGTON, James Watson

Canadian Infantry, 7th Btn. Private. 16431. Died 03/06/1916. Aged 32. James enlisted with the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers for one year. He emigrated to Canada where he worked as a labourer. He enlisted on 18/09/1914 at Valcartier, Quebec. He was 30 years old and single. Oldest son of James and Jane Hetherington, of Killyman St., Moy, Co. Tyrone. Railway Dugouts Burial Ground (Transport Farm), West-Vlaanderen, Belgium. Moy WM

+HOWE, Robert

Canadian Infantry, 13th Btn. Private. 602253. Died 03/06/1916. Age 27. Born Coagh. He served his time in the drapery business with Joseph Geddes, Cookstown, and spent six years in the Royal Irish Constabulary before emigrating to Canada. Son of William and Mary Jane Howe, of 22, St. Ives Gardens, Stranmillis, Belfast, Ireland. Native of Coagh, Co. Tyrone, Ireland. Lijssenthoek Military Cemetery, Belgium. Coagh WM, Coagh Soldiers and Sailors War Memorial 2013

+HOWIE, G

Seaforth Highlanders. 1st/4th Btn. Private. 3722. Died 03/06/1916. Age 34. Husband to Annie Howie, of 6, Lady St., Belfast. Louez Military Cemetery, Duisans, France

+SCHOFIELD, George Leonard

Canadian Infantry. 10th Btn. Private. 20142. Died 03/06/1916 at Mount Sorrell near Ypres. Born in Ireland in January 1892. 1901 Census records that he lived in the military barracks in Armagh where his father was a

Company Sergeant Major in the 7th (Militia) Btn. Royal Irish Fusiliers. The 1911 Census shows the family living in Meadow Bank Street, Shankill Rd., Belfast. His father was listed as an army pensioner. George emigrated to Canada. On 20/09/1914 he enlisted in the 10th Btn of the Canadian Expeditionary Force. His attestation papers state he had served in the Royal Irish Fusiliers. His brother Alfred served in the 1st Btn. Royal Irish Fusiliers and died on 04/07/1915 at home from wounds received in action. Railway Dugouts Burial Ground, Belgium

+STEWART, George Alexander

Canadian Infantry. 14th Bn. Quebec Regiment. Private. 25645. Died 03/06/1916. Age 28. Enlisted in 1914. His brother William Morrison Stewart also fell with Australian army. Son of George and Margaret A. Stewart, of Ballyness, Londonderry. Ireland. Enlisted in 1914. His brother William Morrison Stewart also fell with Australian army. Ypres (Menin Gate) Memorial, Belgium

+TURNER, Theophilus

Royal Irish Rifles. 7th Btn. Rifleman. 5245. Died 03/06/1916. Age 30. Son of John and Sarah Turner, of Lurgan. Dud Corner Cemetery, Loos, France

+WILLIAMSON, R

Royal Irish Rifles, 7th Btn. Rifleman. 6787. Died 03/06/1916. Age 19. Son of Ellen Williamson, of 36, Upton St., Belfast. Dud Corner Cemetery, Loos, France

1917

+BLAIN, Edward

NZEF. Wellington Regiment, 1st. Btn. Private. 28420. Died 03/06/1917. Brother of John Blain of Ballykeel, Artifinney, Hillsborough, Co. Down. From Lake View, Maze or Ballykeel, Artifinney. St. Sever Cemetery Extension, Rouen, France

+HALL, John Joseph

Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, 1st Btn. Private. 11354. Died 03/06/1917. Age 19. Enlisted in Aughnacloy. Born Monaghan, son of Mrs. M. A. McCall. In 1901 the family was living at 65 Moore Street, Aughnacloy Duisans British Cemetery, Etrun, France. Aughnacloy Presbyterian Church RH

+IRWIN, W

Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers. 8th Btn. Lance Corporal. 27667. Died 03/06/1917. Son of Mr. G. Irwin, of Ballynes, Dungiven, Londonderry. La Laiterie Military Cemetery, Belgium

+JOHNSTON, William Joseph

Royal Irish Rifles. 13th Btn. Lance Sergeant. 19037. Died 03/06/1917. Age 22. Son of Joseph and Elizabeth Johnston, of 2, Barrack St., Newry. Pond Farm Cemetery, Belgium

+McKEIRNAN, John

Royal Lancaster Regt.2/5th Bn. Corporal. 240617. Died 03/06/1917. Son of Charles and Mary nee McAllister McKiernan, Culfeitrim, Co. Antrim. Rue-David Cemetery

1918

+MURRAY, Hugh

Royal Irish Rifles, 6th Btn. Rifleman. 3/7431. Died 03/06/1918. Age 29. Husband of Rose Ann Murray, of 5, Sydney St., Belfast. Jerusalem War Cemetery, Israel and Palestine (including Gaza)

+QUINN, Thomas

Royal Irish Rifles. 13th Btn. Rifleman. 18649. Died 03/06/1917. Age 20. Son of Davidson and Susan Quinn, of 582, Cottage, Ballylough, Annsborough. Bailleul Communal Cemetery Extension, Nord, France

1920

+GRAHAM, William

Royal Army Service Corps. Private. R4/111376. Died 03 / 06/1920. Age 50. Husband to Ellen Jane Graham, of 36, Charles St. South, Belfast. Born at Dublin. Served in the South African Campaign with 19th Royal Hussars. Belfast City Cemetery

1940

+ALLEN, Matthew Taylor

Royal Ulster Rifles, 2nd Btn. Rifleman. 7011561. Died 03/06/1940. Aged 31. Son of James and Agnes Jane Allen, of Belfast; husband of Mary Elizabeth Allen, of Darlington, Co. Durham. Dover (St James's Cemetery)

+MAJUREY, Thomas,

Royal Ulster Rifles, 1st Btn. Rifleman. 7013776. Died 03/06/1940. Age 19. He enlisted at the outbreak of WW2. Wounded at Dunkirk, he died at a military hospital in Dover, Kent. The son of Andrew and Dorothy Majurey of 4 Pollard Street, Belfast. One of his brothers, John Majurey, of 44 Rathcoole Street, Belfast also served during the war. Belfast City Cemetery, Glenalina Extension

+THOMPSON, Hugh Joseph

Royal Ulster Rifles, 2nd Btn. Rifleman. 7013406. Died 03/06/1940 at a military hospital in England having been returned to the United Kingdom wounded from Dunkirk, France, where he fought in the rearguard of the British Expeditionary Force with 2nd Btn. Age 20. Hugh enlisted at the outbreak of WW2. He was the son of John "Johnny" Thompson and Annie Thompson of Moltke Street, Belfast. One of Hugh's brothers, William Thompson, served in India with British forces. Before going to war, Hugh and Elizabeth L Swain married. The couple had a baby daughter. 5 Linwood Street, Belfast. Belfast City Cemetery, Glenalina Extension.

1942

+MENARY, James Howard

RAF. Flying Officer. 62689. Died 03/06/1942. Malta Memorial. Lurgan WM

+McMILLAN, Robert

RAF. Leading Aircraftman. 525227. Died 03/06/1942. Aged 29. 70 Sqdn. Son of Robert and Margaret McMillan, Bloomfield, Belfast. Pietermaritzburg (Fort Napier) Cemetery, South Africa

+REID, DAVID

RAFVR. Corporal. 906516. Died 03/06/1942. Aged 28. 43 Sqdn. Son of Thomas B. Reid and Susanna Reid, Belfast; husband of Phyllis Reid, Belmont, Belfast. Dundonald Cemetery

1944

+DUFFY, John Joseph

RAFVR. Flight Sergeant (Wireless Op./Air Gunner).1312519. Died 03/06/1944. Aged 27. Born in Lissummon, Jerrettspass on 27/11/1916, the eldest of the four children of James and Bridget Duffy; husband to Dorothy Lily Duffy, of Wortwell, Norfolk. Malabo Cemetery, Bioko, Equatorial Guinea (See article above)

+MAXWELL, Charles

Royal Ulster Rifles. 70th Btn. Rifleman. 7022229. Discharged from the Army on 18/04/1943. Died 03/06/1944 of tuberculosis. Age 20. Brother Tommy served with the Royal Marines in Burma. Son of William John and Annie Maxwell, of Newtownards. William John Maxwell served

with the Royal Irish Rifles during the First World War. Movilla Cemetery, Newtownards. Newtownards WM

1945

+MARSHALL, Robert William Stanley

RAFVR.Squadron Leader. 63386. Died 03/06/1945. Aged 27. M.B., B.Ch., B.A.O.(Hons.), Queen's University, Belfast.

Robert was born on 12 /07/1917 at 1 Queen's Elms, Belfast. He was a son of Dr Robert Marshall and Evelyn Mary Marshall (nee Marshall) of 3 Derryvolgie Avenue and later, 9 College Gardens, Belfast. Dr Robert Marshall, was a son of William John Marshall, a Belfast merchant, and Evelyn Mary Marshall, a daughter of William Marshall, a Bangor merchant, who were married on 17/10/1916 in May Street Presbyterian Church, Belfast. During the First World War, Dr Robert Marshall served as a Captain in the Royal Army Medical Corps.

Robert William Stanley Marshall was educated at Methodist College, Belfast and Queen's University Belfast where he took his final medical examinations in 1940. Six months later he joined the Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve, and he was attached to the squadrons supporting the operations of the 14th Army in Burma. His wife, Hilary Marshall (nee Crymble) was a daughter of Professor Percival Templeton Crymble and Norah Isabel Crymble (nee Ireland) who were married on 28/07/1914 in Elmwood Presbyterian Church, Belfast.

Robert William Stanley Marshall (aged 24) and Hilary Crymble (aged 26) were married on 23/09/1941 in St Patrick's C of I Parish Church, Drumbeg.

During the Second World War Hilary Marshall, who qualified as a doctor on 19/07/1940, served in India as a Captain in the Royal Army Medical Corps. Robert and Hilary Marshall had no children.

Squadron Leader Robert William Stanley Marshall (No. 63386) was initially reported as missing in action and later it was officially confirmed that he must be presumed to have been killed.

Singapore Memorial, Singapore; Methodist College Belfast RH; Queen's University, Belfast WM and Book of Remembrance; Royal County Down Golf Clubhouse Memorial Plaque; Memorial Plaque in the Marshall Room in the Medical Library in the Royal Victoria Hospital Belfast.

This room was appointed for the use of students by his parents. Marshall family grave headstone Belfast City Cemetery.

1946

+McALEESE, Harry

RAFVR. Leading Aircraftman.1147167. Died 03/06/1946. Age 29. Son of Henry and Mary A. McAleese, of Benvarden. Derrykeighan Old Graveyard, Co. Antrim

1947

+MORAN, William Henry (Harry)

Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers. Fusilier.14468911. Died 03/06/1947. Aged 19. Son of John T. and Gertrude Moran, of Magherafelt. Udine War Cemetery, Italy.

VETERANS

ARMSTRONG, James Rowan

RAFVR. Wing Commander. MRCS and FRCS 1938; MB BCh BAO Belfast 1933; MD 1938; MCh 1941.

James Armstrong was an orthopaedic surgeon. He was born on 03/06/1910 at Ballymena, County Antrim. He came from a staunchly medical Belfast family but spent very little of his life in his native province. His father John was a surgeon and sometime Member of Council of the RCS Ireland; his mother Maria, née Rowan, was a doctor, as were three of his brothers and his sister.

James was educated at Dungannon Royal School and at Queen's University, Belfast, where he qualified in 1933. His father introduced him to basic surgery, teaching him to exploit his ambidexterity and to operate with equal facility with either hand. After his house jobs he left for London, where he took a number of Junior surgical appointments in smaller hospitals and was inspired by Dickson Wright's operative skill. At Charing Cross Hospital he was orthopaedic registrar with David Trevor, confirming his inclination towards that specialty. After gaining his FRCS in 1938 he was for a time surgical registrar to the Metropolitan Hospital, but having already joined the RAF Volunteer Reserve he was called up soon after the outbreak of war. Much of his war service was at RAF Ely, where as a surgical specialist he developed his orthopaedics and on the treatment of fractures by bone grafting. He rose to the rank of wing commander.

His first consultant post was at the Royal Waterloo, followed by appointments at the Manor House, the Metropolitan and

Lambeth Hospitals. The last named was later taken over by St Thomas's, with which the staff was integrated. His particular expertise was in the management of the prolapsed intervertebral disc by laminectomy. His book *Lumbar disc lesions* was first published in 1952 and went through three editions; he co-authored *Injury in sport* with W E Tucker.

As a sportsman he excelled, playing both cricket and rugby for his university and golf for his County (handicap 2); salmon and trout fishing increasingly occupied his later years. His wife commented that he always selected his house surgeons from among the more sporting types on the grounds that they might be more intelligent and would work harder so that they could have time off. This worked well enough (apart from the odd 'patching up' that had to be done on Monday mornings) until a yachtsman was stranded on the other side of the world and was away for longer than anyone had anticipated!

He was a very private person who could seem austere, declining to take part in any committee work or social activities, but to those who knew him well he was a warm and loyal friend and could be immensely entertaining as a raconteur. He was married twice but had no children. After the dissolution of his first marriage he took good care to teach the lady who was to become his second wife, Patricia Timpson, to be both keen and competent on the golf course and the river before he married her. He died on 16/08/1996 after a long illness.

GRAHAM, Robert Dilworth

RN. Radio operator. Served 1941 - 1949 in North Atlantic, Mediterranean and North Africa. Born 17/02/1925 in Newry.

Moved to Canada in November 1951 and was employed in the T. Eaton Company Printing Plant until it was closed in November 1980. In November 1954 he was married to Joyce residing in Winnipeg where together, they raised their three children. He was a member of the Royal Canadian Legion Imperial Vets Branch and the Acacia Masonic Lodge 111. Died 03/06/2004 (Winnipeg Free Press 06/06/2004)

WATTON, Andrew

RN. Boy I. J83512. Boy service from 22/01/1918. In Impregnable. Invalided out 02/07/1919. Born Coleraine 03/06/1902. ADM 188/814/83512

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

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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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