



remembrance ni

**Strabane
Air Ace
was a WW2
Prisoner in
Stalag
Luft 111**



Wing Commander Herbert Douglas Haig Cooper, DFC, had been a member of the OTC at Portora Royal School in Enniskillen. The photograph above shows him being presented to King George VI.

He joined the RAF in 1936 and received his wings in 1937 and was posted to RAF Waddington in October 1937. At the

start of the war he was a flight instructor. He began combat missions in January 1940.

In February he volunteered to fly 12 Bristol Blenheims to Finland. This involved clandestine flights across Norway and landing on a frozen lake near Helsinki, to a rapturous welcome from the Finnish forces. After being feted for two days Cooper and his aircrews were brought to Sweden and eventually brought from there back to Scotland.

For his part in a bombing raid on Maastricht in May he was awarded a DFC.

The citation for his DFC stated -

"In May, 1940, this officer led a formation of aircraft ordered to undertake bombing operations against Maastricht. In spite of heavy gun-fire in the neighbourhood, the attack was pressed home successfully, the road and railway bridges being heavily bombed. Valuable photographs were also obtained which indicated the location of pontoon bridges and the movement of enemy columns."

During the British army retreat to Dunkirk his crew inflicted damages on German positions along the Dutch and Belgian coasts as well as inland France. By June, he and his crew had completed 30 operations. He was transferred to training new pilots in Blenheims.



Montgomery and his two army commanders Bradley and Dempsey at Port-en-Bessin area, France, D-Day +4

He was to remain at this task until February 1941 when he was recalled to operational duty at Watton in Norfolk. A period of bombing raids on north Germany followed and by April they were attacking German shipping.

On 01/07/1941 whilst on an operation to sink or damage shipping on the Kiel Canal, his Blenheim was badly hit by flak. Two of the crew were killed in the descent while Cooper landed on the bank of the canal.

He was taken POW and was held in several camps in Germany and finally in Stalag Luft 111 in Poland. He helped

with but did not take part in the Wooden Horse escape. He was liberated in May 1945.

After the war he chose civilian life and managed his father's thriving cinema business in Strabane. Douglas Cooper died in September 2004. His remains rest in Strabane Cemetery.

Roll of Honour – June 11

Representing their comrades who died on this day

1915

+BRADSHAW, John

Cameronians (Scottish Rifles), 2nd Btn. Private. 7797. Died 11/06/1915. Age 25. Son of John and Matilda Bradshaw, of 25, Yarrow St., Belfast. Merville Communal Cemetery, France

+HAMPTON, Robert

Royal Irish Rifles. 1st Btn. Rifleman. 5257. Died 11/06/1915. Age 22. Son of Thomas Hampton, of Waringstown, Co. Down. Aubers Ridge British Cemetery, Aubers, France

+JENNETT, Joseph

Royal Irish Rifles. 2nd Btn. Rifleman. 20/29. Died 11/06/1915. Age 29. Son of Mrs. Jane Jennett, of 18, Mark St., Lurgan. Ypres (Menin Gate) Memorial, Belgium

+WHITLEY, J

Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, 1st Btn. Private. 9344. Died 11/06/1915. Age 27. Son of Mrs. S. Whitley, of Meeting St., Dromore, Co. Down. Alexandria (Chatby) Military Cemetery and War Memorial, Egypt

1916

+ABERNETHY, John

Royal Irish Rifles, 15th (Service) Btn. (North Belfast Volunteers). Rifleman. 19/60. Died 11/06/1916. Age 22. After training with the 19th Battalion Royal Irish Rifles at Newcastle, he was sent to the North Belfast battalion at the front. He was a labourer in Messrs. Workman & Clark's before the war. Son of Hugh and Annie Abernethy nee Morrison, a brother of Hugh Abernethy and Miss Cassie Abernethy, 16, Constance Street, Belfast. Hamel Military Cemetery, Beaumont-Hamel, France.

+ADAMS, James Alexander

Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers. 1st Btn. D Coy. Lance Corporal. 3694. Died 11/06/1916. Age 18. Son of William and Mary Jane Adams, of 34, Lime St., Belfast. Beauval Communal Cemetery, France

+BOYD, John

Royal Irish Rifles, 8th Btn. Serjeant. 12581. Died 11/06/1916. Age 22. Son of Robert and Agnes Boyd, of 17, Titania St., Cregagh Rd., Belfast. Theipval Memorial, France

+BROOKS, Andrew

Machine Gun Corps (Infantry). 107th Coy. Private. 19550. Died 11/06/1916. Hooker St., Belfast. One of three brothers who died during WW1. Authuile Military Cemetery, Authuile, France

+DONNELLY, Joseph

RNAS. Petty Officer (Motor Mechanic). F/9833. Armoured Car Division. HMS President II. Died 11/06/1916. Age 28. Accidentally drowned in Russia. Son of Thomas and Margaret Donnelly, of 77 Alexander Park Avenue, Belfast. Formerly from Castledawson. Rostov [Bratski] Cemetery. Haidar Pasha Memorial, Turkey. Castledawson WM

+ENGLAND, Frederick

Royal Irish Rifles, 15th Btn. Rifleman. 1646. Died 11/06/1916. Age 18. Son of William and Mary England, of 16, Penrose St., Belfast. Hamel Military Cemetery, Beaumont-Hamel, France

+GAULT, Joseph Birkmyre

Royal Irish Rifles, 15th Btn. Rifleman. 12814 Died 11/06/1916. Age 18. Son of Mrs. M. Gault, of 33, Glenbank

Place, Ballysillan, Belfast.Hamel Military Cemetery,
Beaumont-Hamel, France

+HERON, George

Royal Irish Rifles, 15th (Service) Btn. (North Belfast Volunteers). Rifleman. 15/7163. Died 11/06/1916. Age 18. Before enlisting he was an apprentice driller at Messrs. Workman, Clark's shipyard. He was a member of the North Belfast Regiment Ulster Volunteer Force, In a letter to Heron's mother Second-Lieutenant Gillespie said he fell doing his duty in the front line trench. A shell burst behind him, and he died instantaneously from the shock. Son of John and Margaret (Maggie) Heron nee Keith, of 30 Ivan Street, York Road, Belfast. Hamel Military Cemetery, Beaumont-Hamel, France. Workman Clark (shipyard) memorial. St. Paul's Church of Ireland Great War memorial, Shore Road, Belfast

+McCLEAN, Ramsey

Royal Irish Rifles, 16th Btn. Rifleman. 641. Died 11/06/1916. Born Doagh or Antrim. Enlisted Lurgan. Before joining the Rifles he had enlisted in Belfast on 19/11/1915 with the Army Service Corps (030859) being disvcharged as unfit for the duties of the Corps. He and Martha Jane Jones married in Holy Trinity C of I, Belfast on 05/01/1900. Three of their five children died. Ramsey worked as a millworker and a labourer in the shipyard. They lived at 5 Ohio Street, Belfast. Ste Marie Cemetery, Le Havre, France. Ballyclare WM

+McGRATH, J

Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, 7th Btn. Private. 24705. Died 11/06/1916. Age 22. Son of James and Mary McGrath, of 24, Colligan St., Belfast. Philosophe British Cemetery, Mazingarbe, France

+MONTGOMERY, James

Royal Irish Rifles, 15th Btn. Rifleman. 3905. Died 11/06/1916. Age 21. Son of Mrs. Annie Montgomery, of 68, Church St. East, Newtownards Rd., Belfast. Hamel Military Cemetery, Beaumont-Hamel, France

+SWAN, Andrew

Royal Irish Rifles. 15th Btn. Rifleman. 908. Died 11/06/1916. Enlisted in Belfast. A brother William (5208) who enlisted in Belfast on 12/08/1897, was a serjeant with the Royal Irish Rifles. Another brother David was a Sapper (17897). With the Inland Water Depot, Royal Engineers. Born in County Antrim which could also include part of Belfast. Son of James and Elizabeth Swan. Hamel Military Cemetery, Beaumont - Hamel, France

1917

+CUMMINGS, David Ernest

Royal Irish Rifles, 14th Btn. Rifleman. 16369. Died 11/06/1917. Age 25. Son of Mr. and Mrs. D. Cummings, of Belfast. Bailleul Communal Cemetery Extension, France

+McMAHON, Patrick

Royal Irish Rifles, 4th Btn. Second Lieutenant. Died 11/06/1917. Aged 29. Volunteered and enlisted into the

Black Watch Territorials in August 1914, Royal Highlanders (2171). Commissioned in RIR 11/06/1915. He sailed for France on 19/11/1915. Took part in the action on Viny Ridge, April 1916. The De Ruvigny Roll of Honour records: "... was wounded in the Somme battle was wounded at Messines receiving gunshots in the left side and arm ... died the same day in the grounds of the casualty clearing station ..." Born on 08/11/886 in Irish Street, Armagh City, the son of Patrick McMahon (Flax Merchant) and Annie McMahon nee Quinn. Educated at Skerries School and Christian Brothers School. Around 1904-1906 McMahon (18/20) Patrick joined the Belfast Banking Company and served in Newry and Buncrana branches. In 1911, McMahon is recorded as boarding in house 102, Main Street, Letterkenny, Co. Donegal. He is described as a Bank Clerk. Balleul Communal Cemetery Extension, Nord, France

+WHITE, Joseph

N.Z.E.F. Canterbury Regiment. 2nd Btn. Private. 29328. Died 11/06/1917. Age 34. Joseph worked on his father's farm before emigrating to New Zealand where he worked as a labourer on the railway before enlisting in June 1916. Son of William and Anne White of Ballydoo, Killylea. Abbeville Communal Cemetery Extension, France

1918

+GORDON, Thomas



Royal Irish Rifles. 16th Btn. Lance Corporal. 20/29. Died 11/06/1918. Age 24. Brother of Rifleman William Gordon, Machine Gun Corps, who died instantly by shellfire 31/05/1918 while on transport duties. Son of Thomas and Agnes (nee Kelly) Gordon, Meeting Street Dromore Co

Bretteville-sur-Laize Canadian War Cemetery

Down Husband to Bridget Gordon, of Gallows St., Dromore, Co Down. Dromore WM. 1st Dromore Presbyterian Church RH

+WATTERS, C

King's Own Scottish Borderers, 2nd Btn. Private. 41372. Died 11/06/1918. Age 19. Son of John and Elizabeth

Watters, of 17, Ewarts Row, Belfast. Tannay British Cemetery, Thiennes, France

1919

+McKEOWN, J

Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers. Serjeant. 1737. transf. to (649375, Serjt.) Labour Corps. Died 11/06/1919. Age 39. Son of William and Sarah McKeown, of Enniskillen; husband to Margret McKeown (nee McSorley), of 10, New Rd., Enniskillen, Co. Fermanagh. Belfast City Cemetery

1940

+HANNA, JAMES

AB. S.S. Saint Ronaig (Glasgow). Died 11/06/1940. Aged 33. Son of William John and Elizabeth Hanna, of Taylor's Row, Carrickfergus. Another son Samuel, an Air Raid Warden, was also killed. James was husband to Martha Hanna, of Carrickfergus. Joymount Presbyterian Church. (Belfast Weekly Telegraph 10/05/1941.)

+IRVINE, William Charles

RAF. Aircraftman, 1st Class (Wireless Operator). 625299. Died 11/06/1940. Age 19. 220 Sqdn. He was on board a coastal command aircraft, Hudson P5127, which got into difficulties after takeoff and dived into the ground one mile north of Thornaby, Yorkshire. Son of William and Ethel Victoria Irvine (nee Appleby), Doorless, Tullyhogue,

Cookstown. Thornaby-on-Tees Cemetery, North Yorkshire.
Cookstown WM

+WITH, Samuel

Northamptonshire Regiment, 2nd Btn. Serjeant. 5883450.
Died 11/06/1940. Aged 24. Son of Mr. and Mrs. Joseph
With, of Shoreditch, London; husband of Doreen K. With, of
Newcastle, Co. Down. Dunkirk Memorial, Nord, France

1942

+FINLAY, JOHN

West Yorkshire Regiment, 2nd Btn. (Prince of Wales's Own).
Private. 4545291. Died 11/06/1942. Aged 33. Son of Bella
McIlveen, of Caledon, Co. Tyrone. Benghazi War Cemetery,
Libya

+MATTHEWS, Albert Edward

RN. Stoker 1st Class. D/KX 115307. Died 11/07/1942.
Age:19. H.M.S. Drake IV. Son of Albert and Mary Elizabeth
Mathews, Strangford. Plymouth Naval Memorial, Panel 70

1944

+HARVEY, William

RAFVR. Warrant Officer (Wireless Op./Air
Gunner).1078296. Died 11/06/1944. Aged 23. 78 Sqdn. Son
of John Harvey and of Matilda Harvey (nee Brown), of
Londonderry. Harrogate (Stonefall) Cemetery, Yorkshire

+MAGILL, Nathaniel Morton

Royal Ulster Rifles, 1st Btn. D Coy. Rifleman. 14416538. Died 11/06/1944 at Longueval, Normandy, when his platoon came under sniper fire while clearing the orchard to the rear of Battalion HQ of snipers. Before joining the Royal Ulster Rifles, he first enlisted in the General Service Corps. All his three brothers served in the British Army during the Second World War, including two who saw action with 2nd Battalion Royal Ulster Rifles. Aged 19. Son of James and Mary Magill, Britannic Street, Belfast ; nephew of Mrs. E. Hanna, of Belfast. Two brothers served in the 2nd Battalion and a third elsewhere. Ranville War Cemetery, Calvados, France

+MATTHEWS, Patrick

Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, 1st Btn. Fusilier. 6980394. Died 11/06/1944. Aged 21. Like his father and five brothers, Patrick served in the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers. Two of his brothers were prisoners of war in Germany. The Matthews family circle has a remarkable record of service. It is estimated that counting cousins and nephews some 25 were in the forces. Son of Thomas and Jean Matthews, of Tanderagee and Banbrook Hill, Armagh. Kohima War Cemetery, India

+OFORD, Henry

Black Watch, 5th Btn. (Royal Highlanders). Private. 14434072. Died 11/06/1944 during the Black Watch's advance on Breville. Aged 19. Son of Albert and Margaret Oford, of Londonderry. Ranville War Cemetery, Calvados, France

+SAUNDERSON, Percival John

Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, 1st Btn. Fusilier. 14433126. Died 11/06/1944. Aged 23. Son of George and Margaret Sanderson, of Enniskillen. Kohima War Cemetery, India

+WRIGHT, Harold

RAFVR. Leading Aircraftman. 949628. Died 11/06/1944. Aged 25. 2853 Sqdn. R.A.F. Regt. Son of Henry and Helen Wright of Blaina; husband of Margaret Kathleen Wright, of Dromore, Co. Down. Nantyglo and Blaina (Blaina) Cemetery, Monmouthshire

VETERAN

BROWNLEE, James Victor

RNVR. Lt (A). BSc 1948 QUB. MCB. Born 11/06/1919. Son of Rev WT Brownlee, Brookeborough. Postwar business career. Uplands, Stowmarket.

**Every day is a Remembrance
Day**

We will remember them

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masthead.**

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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