



## remembrance ni



### **Belfast Gunner's unique contribution to rugby**

Today marks the anniversary of the death of British Lion and Irish international, Robert Alexander, a captain in the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, who fell while leading his troops in an attack on the Simento River, near Catania, Sicily.

This cross on the Somme near Lochnagar Mine Crater marks the spot where the body of a British soldier was discovered in October 1998. When excavating his remains a razor was found identifying the man to be Private George Nugent who had been reported missing 82 years earlier.

Two other Irish Lions on the 1938 tour of South Africa served during WW2. They were Harry McKibbin and Blair Mayne. Below - photo of Harry's Lions' Cap



## Press tributes to Harry McKibbin

The doyen of modern Irish rugby correspondents, **Edmund Van Esbeck of The Irish Times**, penned the following tribute to Harry McKibbin. Writing 04/09/2001, the day after Harry's death, Van Esbeck stated -

“Harry McKibbin was a member of one of Ireland's most renowned rugby families and a man whose contribution to





The Irish rugby team that played against England on 12th February 1938. Robert Alexander who served in the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers and who is remembered in today's Roll of Honour, is at the right of the seated row. He died near Catania, Sicily while leading his troops in an attack on the Simento River.

the game nationally and internationally made him one of the most substantial figures in the history of the game. He was 86.

“Born in Belfast in July 1915 and educated at RBAI, he subsequently studied law at Queen's University and qualified as a solicitor.



The first time 8 Irish players started a test for the Lions, they beat South Africa in the 3rd test 21-16 in 1938. The team included 4 Queen's University Lions Legends, 1st left Blair Mayne, 4th Lt George Cromey, 2 right Harry McKibbin, last right Robert Alexander, also pictured tour captain Sammy Walker 2nd Lt, 3rd Lt Robert Graves, 5th Lt Charles Boyles, 6th left George Morgan.

“He made his international debut as a 22-year-old in the centre against Wales in 1938. Despite having just one cap, he was chosen for the Lions tour to South Africa in the summer of 1938, a side captained by his fellow Irishman Sammy Walker.

“In 1939 McKibbin played in all three matches in the Championship - France did not participate. Ireland beat England and Scotland but lost the Triple Crown match to Wales at Ravenhill.

“Like so many other players of his era, the second World War deprived him of his best playing years. He joined the Royal Artillery, reached the rank of major and had a distinguished war record.

“At the end of the war he played briefly for Instonians and while his international career was short but distinguished, he was to make a huge contribution as an administrator of world renown.

“He served as an Ireland selector for four years from 1960 to 1963, was president of the Ulster Branch, and the esteem in which he was held was demonstrated when he was made the centenary president of the IRFU in 1974-'75. He received the CBE for his services to rugby in 1975.

“He was one of Ireland's representatives on the International Board from 1967 to 1987 and was assistant manager of the Lions team that toured South Africa in 1962. His contribution to the game was recognised when he was inducted into the Rugby Writers of Ireland Hall of Fame.”

**The Independent** recalled, “Harry and his younger brother Des both played for Ireland and two of Harry's three sons, Harry junior and Alistair, also represented their country. A third son, Roger, was an Irish trialist before injury ended his career. The family achievement matches that of the Collopys, who also had a father and two sons capped by Ireland...

...Born in Belfast, McKibbin learnt his rugby at the Royal Belfast Academical Institution, where he was head boy and a member of the school 1st XV for four years, and at Queen's University, Belfast, where he read Law. His first-

class rugby career began at university before he switched to Instonians...

...McKibbin's younger brother Des won eight caps for Ireland at prop and, like Harry, became president of the IRFU, the only instance of two brothers filling that position.”

## **Sentimental journey to a little village near Arras**

The late **Malcolm Brodie of the Belfast Telegraph, and President of its RBL Branch**, in his tribute highlighted McKibbin”s war service -

“Like so many other sportsmen and women of his generation the Second World War robbed him of further caps.

“He joined the 8th Belfast Regiment Royal Artillery, served in various theatres of war, rose to the rank of major and some years ago made a sentimental journey to a little village near Arras to meet up with Madame Emilie Tetier in whose home he was billeted with Stuart Pollock, another distinguished Irish sportman...

...Harry McKibbin's contribution can never be measured. As one of the foremost legislators he revealed wisdom, diplomacy and the ability with his soft spoken approach to cut through administrative minefields.”

## **French honour Prix Albert Taureguy Shield**

“In fact, the French Rugby Federation in 1985 awarded him the coveted Prix Albert Taureguy Shield given annually to the person who, in the opinion of the Federation, has done most to further the cause of rugby.

“Normally, it does not go outside France but such was the regard and esteem the French had for him he was made the unanimous choice.”

Also on the Lions Tour of 1938 was **Blair ‘Paddy’ Mayne**, a champion Heavyweight boxer, and a QUB, Ulster, and Ireland rugby player.

Mayne was an original member of the SAS, won a DSO and three bars – he is only one of seven men in history who have achieved that quadruple honour.

## On this day – July 19

### 1915

At Verdun the German attack near Les Eparges is repulsed with heavy losses.

It is announced in the House of Commons that the **total casualties in the Dardanelles** up to the 30/06/1915 are 42,434.



## **1916 Ulster Division - report in Belfast News Letter**

Letters which are now being received from the front bear testimony to the gallant manner which the officers and men of the Ulster Division acquitted themselves in the sanguinary fighting that took place on the 1st inst, the day on which the great offensive movement was launched by the Allied armies. An artillery officer writing to his relatives in Armagh says :- "All well and don't worry. It is not easy to write much at present and nothing to talk of but the battle, and, as you know, one can say nothing about it. However there is one thing I can say and that is the Ulster Division put up one of the finest fights in the war, and reached their objective by gallantry and determination. It was not their fault that they had to fall back again, and they fought like tigers every inch of the way back. The 1st July will in future be an even bigger day for Ulster than the Twelfth.

### **1916**

**The Battle of Fromelles took place.** Two divisions participated, the first of those divisions was the 61st South Midland Division which suffered just over 1,500 losses, killed, wounded & missing.

A number of the 61st South Midlands Divisions dead were laid to rest in Laventie Military Cemetery, one of them was Private Leslie Thomas Foxon, of the 2/6th Battalion Gloucestershire Regiment. Born 03/10/1900, died 119/07/1916, aged 15 years. Possibly the youngest to have died in the Battle of Fromelles.



The second of those divisions was the 5th Australian Division which suffered just over 5,500 losses, killed, wounded & missing.

Amongst the dead was Harry Moffitt, Adjutant to Lieut. Col. Ignatius Norris. Harry was the fiancée of Alice Ross-King who was awarded the Military Medal at Trois Arbres.

Alice penned her account of receiving the news of Harry's death in her diary and then later a poem penned by Ellen Gates.

Today Alice Ross Kings diary is held in the archives at the Australian War Memorial in Canberra. Alice's medals including her Military Medal are proudly owned and worn by her granddaughter, Maggie.

## 1919

**The first official 'Peace Day' celebrations in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland were held.**

Peace Day Parade took place in Dublin. 20,000 soldiers marched from Dame St to St. Stephen's Green celebrating the end of The Great War. Thousands came to celebrate. Photo above shows people sitting on the roof of Trinity College, Dublin.

The mood changed that night when 2 soldiers were attacked a Dublin Metropolitan Policeman man shot.



On the morning of the 19/08/1919 thousands gathered in London, having arrived overnight. It was a spectacle never seen before, with nearly 15,000 troops taking part in the victory parade, led by Allied commanders Pershing (head of the US Expeditionary Force), Foch (Allied supreme commander) and Haig (British Commander in Chief), who saluted fallen comrades. Bands played, and the central parks of London hosted performances and entertained the crowds.

Although the main local commemorations were still 3 to 4 weeks away, one town was in the news holding its 'Peace Day' celebrations.

## **Portrush celebrates Peace Day**

A contemporary report states -

“In **Portrush** there was a day of joy and thanksgiving. The famous North Antrim watering-place never, perhaps, looked so brilliant. Flags, streamers, and bunting in almost endless variety fluttered gaily in the breeze, and loyal emblems were everywhere worn. A grand procession headed by a military band, followed by sailors, soldiers, ex-servicemen, a St John’s Ambulance detachment, Church Lads, school children, people in fancy dress, decorated jaunting cars, motors, vans, bicycles with thousands of cheering spectators lining the route. One of the bicycles was a very smart representation of an aeroplane. In the afternoon was a free matinee at the Main Street Picture House supplemented by a concert. A great sports meeting with a fireworks display at Ramore Head followed in the evening.”

**Significant events on this day in WW2 include Britain’s biggest tank battle to capture the remains of Caen and the formation of the Intelligence Corps**

**1940**



**The Intelligence Corps** was formed. King George VI approved the formation of the Intelligence Corps on 15 July

1940. The publication of Army Order No. 112, on 19 July 1940 made it so. Happy Birthday Intelligence Corps!

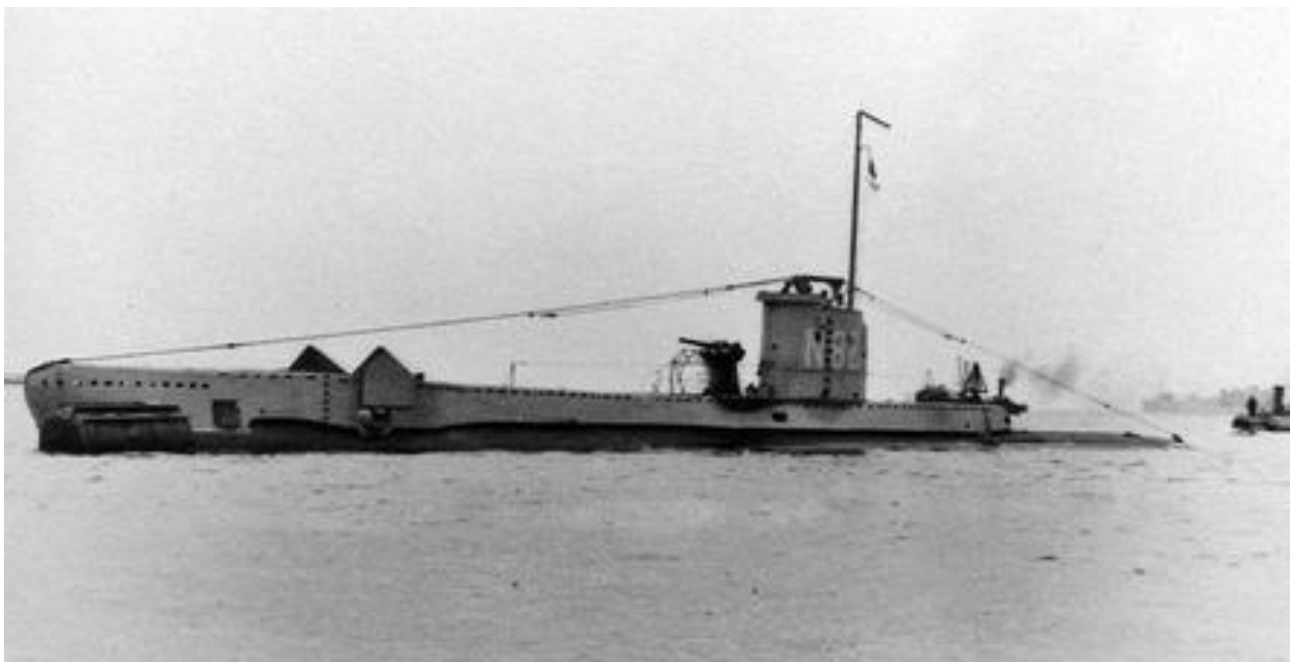
**General Sir Alan Brooke** takes over from Ironside as C-in-C, Home Forces. Ironside becomes a Field Marshal.

**Hitler** makes triumphant speech to Reichstag: accuses Allies of war mongering and appeals 'for the last time to reason'.

The **Italian Cruiser, Bartolomeo Colleoni is sunk** off Cape Spada, near Crete by HMAS Sydney.

## 1941

**Submarine HMS Umpire** was accidentally rammed and sunk off Cromer: she was with a convoy but had dropped behind with engine trouble and was struck by an armed



trawler escorting another convoy. 16 died, 22 saved, with the crew showing great heroism.

British PM **Winston Churchill** launches his "**V for Victory**" campaign.



BBC announces the 'V Army', the resistance movement in Occupied Europe.

George Armstrong executed at Wandsworth prison for spying.

**Hitler issues Directive No.33. This states that Moscow is no longer the priority,** but that once the Smolensk pocket has been reduced, then Army Group Centre is to hand over Panzer Group 3 to Army Group North and Panzer Group 2 to Army Group South. This will enable the flanks to be secured by capturing Leningrad in the North and overrunning the Ukraine in the South.

## **1942**

German U-boats are withdrawn from positions off the U.S. Atlantic coast due to effective American anti-submarine countermeasures.

Himmler orders Operation Reinhard, mass deportations of Jews in Poland to extermination camps.

Japanese invasion fleet leaves Rabaul for Buna, New Guinea.

## **1943**

USAAF planes bomb Rome for the first time, using carefully drawn maps in an attempt to avoid hitting the city's numerous historic churches. The effort is deemed nearly perfect; only one church is damaged, Basilica at San Lorenzo.

## **1944**

The British 3rd Division is repulsed from Emiville four times as the Canadians clear the southern suburbs of Caen. The British 11th Armoured Division takes Bras and Hubert-Follie. The U.S. 34th Division captures Livorno on the Italian coast. The Russians claim to have crossed into Latvia. U.S. Marines invade Guam in the Marianas.

## 1945

Lt. General James Doolittle establishes the US Eighth Air Force on Okinawa, having transferred from England.



## Roll of Honour – July 19

### 1915

#### **+WATSON, Joseph**

Highland Light Infantry, 11th Btn. Private. 19896. Died 19/07/1915. Aged 22. Born Unchinagh. Lived Ballymaconnelly. Enlisted Hamilton, Lanarkshire. Member of Ballymaconnelly, L.O.L. 360. Le Touret Military Cemetery. Finvoy Presbyterian Church RH. Ballymoney WM

### 1916

#### **+CASSIDY, Charles**

Dorsetshire Regiment. 2nd Btn. Private. 16794. Died at sea on the Hospital Ship Dungola on 19/07/1916. Age 24. Son of Randalstown born, the late C.S.M. C. Cassidy and of Ann Cassidy, of Wareham Rd., Corfe Mullen, Wimborne, Dorset. Chatby Memorial, Egypt. Corfe Mullen WM

**+CRUMPTON, Thomas**

Royal Irish Rifles, 2nd Btn. Rifleman. 7285. Died 19/07/1916. Age 26. Husband of Mary Crumpton, of 24, McAuley St., Belfast. Etaples Military Cemetery, France

**+HALL, Anthony**

A.I.F. Australian Infantry. 53rd Btn. Private. 3341A. Died 19/07/1916. Born in Co. Tyone. In 1901 he was one of five sons of Joseph and Jane Hall, all living at Tullyhugh, Tandragee. Anthony emigrated to Australia. He enlisted in 1915. VC Corner Australian Cemetery and Memorial, Fromelles, France

**+JAMIESON, A**

Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, 7th Btn. Private. 13033. Died 19/07/1916. Son of Mary Jamieson, of 89, Tildarg St., Belfast. Philosophe British Cemetery, Mazingarbe, France

**+MAWHINNEY, Samuel**

Royal Irish Rifles, 11th Btn. Lance Corporal. 547. Died of wounds received on July 1 while a POW on 19/07/1916. Aged 22. He appears to have been wounded in the leg during the opening stage of the Somme battle, was taken prisoner and he died despite medical care being given. His mother posted requests for information in the local press and got some response but official notification came later.

The "Ballymena Observer" on 24/11/1916, reported that, "Mrs. Mawhinney, Shankbridge, Ballymena, has been notified that her son, Lance Corporal Samuel Mawhinney, Royal Irish Rifles, has died of wounds while a prisoner of war in Germany. Prior to enlisting, he was an employee of the Ballymena Goods Yard in Harryville, where he was most popular." Le Cateau Military Cemetery. Kells Presbyterian Church RH. L.M.S. Railway Company WM

### **+McKINNEY, Thomas George**

Royal Fusiliers (City of London Regiment), 20th Btn. D Coy. Private. 5265. Died 19/07/1916 of wounds received on 03/07/1916. Age 23. Educated RBAI. Ballyhaise Agricultural College, Co. Cavan. Born Ballyvessey 02/07/1893. Son of John Thoburn McKinney and Catherine McKinney, of Sentry Hill, Carnmoney, Belfast. Longuenesse (St Omer) Souvenir Cemetery, France. Carnmoney Presbyterian Church RH, RBAI Great War Memorial

### **+NIBLOCK, John**

Cheshire Regiment. 16th Btn. Corporal. 21361. Died 19/07/1916. From Rowland Street, Sandy Row, Belfast, Thiepval Memorial, France

## **1917**

### **+SPROTT, HF**

Royal Irish Rifles. Rifleman. 11-16972. Died 19/07/1917 (Family Memorial ) Carnmoney Parish Church RH

## **1918**



## **+BROWN, J**

Royal Irish Rifles. 1st Btn. Rifleman. 1568. Died 20/07/1918. Husband of Mrs. E. Brown, of 21, Israel St., Belfast. Godewaersvelde British. Cemetery, France

## **+MACKEY, Samuel Ross**

RNR. Trimmer. 8458TS. HMS Vivid. Died 19/07/1918. Age 19. Illness. Son of William and Sarah Mackey, Circular Rd., Larne. Larne WM. First Larne - PCI RH

## **+MILNE, Ashley Albert**

Royal Irish Rifles, 15th Btn. Rifleman. 17/2247. Died 19/07/1918. Taken prisoner in March 1918. Son of Thomas and Caroline Milne of 107 Roden Street, Belfast. Berlin South-Western Cemetery, Spanbroekmolen, Germany

## **+NELSON, Samuel**

Royal Irish Rifles, 2nd Btn. Rifleman. 6917. Died 19/07/1918. Age 28. Born on 11/09/1890 in New Street, Bangor. Samuel Nelson served his apprenticeship with George Ardrey and Company (Boot Warehouse) Main Street, Bangor and he lived for four years in South Africa. He was a member of Loyal Orange Lodge (LOL) No. 933 in Bangor and prior to the outbreak of the Great War he worked for Messrs John Robb and Company (Department Store) Castle Place, Belfast. Samuel Nelson joined the Young Citizen Volunteers, he enlisted in Belfast and joined the 114<sup>th</sup> Btn Royal Irish Rifles. Samuel Nelson and Madge Horner Millar were married on 20/09/1915 in Hamilton Road Presbyterian Church Bangor. During the Great War



Rifleman Samuel Nelson served with the 2<sup>nd</sup> Btn Royal Irish Rifles and on 04/10/1915, two weeks after he got married, he went to the Front with the British Expeditionary Force (BEF). Son of Mr. and Mrs. William Nelson, of Ballymagee St., Bangor, Co. Down; husband to Madge Nelson, of 22, Thorndyke St., Belfast. Esquelbecq Military Cemetery, Nord, France. Bangor and District WM. Royal British Legion (Bangor Branch) Memorial Plaque

### **+ROCKE, WJ**

Royal Engineers. Inland Waterways Docks. Pioneer. WR/ 341612. Died 19/07/1918. Kilwaughter New Cemetery, Co. Antrim

### **+WRIGHT, Samuel James**

United States Army, 2nd Division, 23rd Infantry Regiment, US Army. Sergeant. Died 19/07/1918. Youngest son of Thomas Wright. Samuel was born in Aughnacloy about 1890. The Ellis Island website lists a Samuel Wright, born Tyrone, who arrived in the United States on 26th May 1906. He was 16 years old. Samuel was living in Penn Line, Pennsylvania prior to enlisting. Oise-Aisne American Cemetery and Memorial, Fere-en-Tardenois, Seringes-et-Nesles, France

## 1940

### **+GRAHAM, John**

Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, 1st Btn. Fusilier. 6980180. Died as a result of an accident at Rye, Sussex 19/07/1940. Aged 22. Son of Archibald Graham and Annie Graham of Belfast. Carnmoney Cemetery

## 1941

### **+DAVEY, James Patrick**

RN. AB. D/JX192737. HMS President III. Died 19/07/1941. Age 26. Son of John and T Davey, Belfast. Husband to Kathleen Davey, Belfast. Plymouth Naval Memorial, Panel 46

## 1942

### **+WILSON, Samuel James**

RAFVR. Sergeant. 1026302. Died 19/07/1942. Aged 22. He was a Wireless operator/Air Gunner on board Vickers Wellington DV800 of RAF No. 27 Operational Training Unit when it came down in Snowdonia, Wales. The crew took off on 19/07/1942 from RAF Lichfield, Staffordshire on a cross-country training flight. While flying over North Wales, the

plane strayed about 10 miles off course above the cloud base at 2,000 feet. At around 1230hrs, the pilot came down through the cloud cover to ascertain their position. The plane crashed in the Black Ladders area, between Carnedd Dafydd and Carnedd Llewelyn, Snowdonia, Wales. There were no survivors. Rescuers from RAF Llandwrog located the crash site 10 days after the incident. There were no survivors.

Samuel received his education at Portadown Technical School. He was a member of the Boys' Brigade at St. Mark's Church and a keen musician. He was a member of Parkmount Band conducted by his father Albert Wilson. He also played in the Night Lights Dance Band conducted by his older brother. Before and after enlisting in the Royal Air Force, he took part in shows to entertain troops. Son of Albert Wilson and Mamie Wilson of Shillington Street, Portadown. A funeral service took place on 3rd August 1942 at St. Mark's Church, Portadown, conducted by Reverend JF McAlister and Reverend FW Gowing. The Royal Irish Fusiliers provided a firing party and a bugler who sounded The Last Post and Reveille. Pallbearers were six sergeants from the Royal Air Force.

**1943**

**+ALEXANDER, Robert**

Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, 2nd Btn. Captain. 129996. Died 19/07/1943. aged 32, leading his troops in an attack across the Simeto River in Sicily, Italy. His remains rest with many of his comrades in Catania War Cemetery. In a letter to Bob's brother, his Commanding Officer wrote: "I cannot put on paper what a loss he has been to the Regiment as the



finest type of officer and leader, and to us personally as a friend.” Robert joined the Royal Ulster Constabulary in 1937 before enlisting in Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers. He was commissioned in 1940 and promoted to Captain in 1941. He died near Catania, Sicily while leading his troops in an attack on the Simento River. A fellow officer, David Cole, said “Bob passed me on the way. I wished him luck. He paused for a second and whispered to me with a smile, ‘It’s suicide’, and then went on”. He graduated from QUB in Science in 1929. Robert joined the Royal Ulster Constabulary in 1937 before enlisting in Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers. He was commissioned in 1940 and promoted to Captain in 1941

Prior to the war he was a notable cricket and rugby player. He played cricket for Ireland. He played rugby for RBAI, Queen’s University, NIFC, and the Police Union. Considered a large player by the standards of the day, Bob’s speed made him a natural for his favoured position, Flanker. Between 1936 and 1939 he won 11 Irish international caps. His only Irish try came against Scotland in 1937. He played for the Barbarians in 1935 - 36, and toured in South Africa with the Lions in 1938, scoring a try against South Africa in Cape Town. Also in the team were three other players who had played for QUB - George Cromey, Blair Mayne, and Harry McKibbin. The last two also would serve in the war. He graduated in Science at QUB in 1929. Born on 24/09/1910, he was the son of David Alexander and Minnie Alexander, Belfast. Catania War Cemetery, Sicily, Italy.

### **+BELL, David**

Cameronians (Scottish Rifles). 2nd Btn. Lance Corporal. 6983663. Died 19/07/1943. Age 22. Son of George and

Maria Bell, of Bessbrook, Co. Armagh. Catania War Cemetery, Sicily. Italy

**+DOHERTY, Hugh**

Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, 2nd Btn. Fusilier. 6980628. Died 19/07/1943. Aged 24. Husband of Annie F. Doherty, of Londonderry. Cassino Memorial, Italy

**+DOHERTY, Joseph**

Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, 2nd Btn. Fusilier. 6980623. Died 11/07/1943. Aged 30. Son of Joseph and Madge Doherty, of Londonderry. Cassino Memorial, Italy

**+DUNCAN, Samuel George**

RM. Marine, PLY/X3717, Royal Marines. Died 19/07/1943 as a Prisoner of War at Konue Camp. In HMS Repulse which together with HMS Prince of Wales had left Singapore shortly after the outbreak of war with Japan on 08/12/1941. In an attempt to intercept a Japanese invasion convoy going towards Malaya. He survived her sinking by Japanese war planes dropping torpedo's on 10/12/1941. Although he was rescued, Marine Duncan was subsequently taken prisoner and died as a prisoner of war at Konue Camp. Son of Samuel and Lucy Duncan, Soarn Cottage, Stewartstown. Kanchanaburi War Cemetery, Thailand.

**+FEENEY, Daniel**

Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, 2nd Btn. Fusilier. 6980619. Died 19/07/1943. Aged 22. Son of George and Bridget Feeney, of Londonderry. Catania War Cemetery, Sicily, Italy



On the anniversary of the Attack at Fromelles, V.C. Corner Australian Cemetery and Memorial under an angry sky. Many of those originally commemorated here have now been identified and are buried in CWGC Fromelles

**+FEENEY, Daniel**

Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, 2nd Btn. Fusilier. 6980619. Died 19/07/1943. Aged 22. Son of George and Bridget Feeney, of Londonderry. Catania War Cemetery, Sicily, Italy

**+GILDEA, Robert**

Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, 2nd Btn. Fusilier. 6980686. Died 19/07/1943 at the Battle of Lemon Bridge, Sicily. Age 36. Robert Gildea was the son of Robert and Hester Gildea. He

was born on 05/10/1906 in Cookstown. His father had been in the army and was a painter. Robert worked as a farm labourer. While in service he was 'batman' to Colonel Pennyfeather-Evans. Catania War Cemetery, Sicily.  
Cookstown WM

**+GUY, Andrew**

Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, 2nd Btn. Fusilier. 6980895. Died 19/07/1943. Aged 28. Son of James and Mary Guy, of Dungiven, Co. Londonderry. Catania War Cemetery, Sicily.

**+HARKNESS, William J**

Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, 2nd Btn. Fusilier. 6982809. Died 19/07/1943 at the Battle of Lemon Bridge, Sicily. Son of William Harkness and Susan Harkness (nee Harrison) of Killycolp, Tullyhogue, Cookstown; husband to Mary J. Harkness, Coalisland, Co. Tyrone. Catania War Cemetery, Sicily. Cookstown WM

**+JOHNSTONE, George**

Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, 2nd Btn. 6980708. Died 19/07/1943. Aged 42. Husband to Mary J. Johnstone, of Moyne, Omagh. Cassino Memorial, Italy

**+MAGUIRE, Robert**

Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, 2nd Btn. Fusilier. 6982832. Died 19/07/1943. Aged 22. Son of Robert Maguire, and of Margaret Maguire, of Londonderry. Cassino Memorial, Italy

**+MARTIN, George Alexander**

Royal Ulster Rifles. 2nd Btn. Rifleman. 7021483. Died 20/07/1944. Age 21. on of Henry and Margaret Martin, of Soldierstown, Co. Antrim. Banneville-La-Campagne War cemetery, France.



**+McATEER, HENRY J**

Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, 2nd Btn. Lance Serjeant. 6979625. Died 19/07/1943. Aged 22. Son of Hugh and Sadie McAteer, of Carrickfergus. Catania War Cemetery, Sicily, Italy.

**+NIXON, George**

Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, 2nd Btn. Fusilier. 6979368. Died 19/07/1943. Aged 22. Son of Thomas and Elizabeth Nixon, of Beragh, Co. Tyrone. Catania War Cemetery, Sicily, Italy.

**+REID, THOMAS**

Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, 2nd Btn. Corporal. 6981737. Died 19/07/1943. Aged 22. Son of James and Mary Jane Reid, of Belfast. Catania War Cemetery, Sicily, Italy.

**+ROTHWELL, Brian Thomas Stewart**

Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, 2nd Btn. Lieutenant .190207. Died 19/07/1943 during fighting at the Simento River in Sicily. Aged 21. Born in Dublin on 14/10/1921. Third son of Lieutenant Colonel William Edward Rothwell DSO and Frances Violet Rothwell (née Poole) of Terenure, Dublin and later Ormeau Road, Belfast. They were married on 15/12/1915 in St Peter's Church of Ireland Church Dublin. Brian Rothwell was a grandson of Dr and Mrs Jonas Poole of 49 Adelaide Park, Belfast. Both Brian Rothwell and his brother, John Edward Desmond Rothwell (born in 1920 in Sealkote, India) attended Rockport. Catania War Cemetery, Sicily, Italy. Rockport School. Trinity College, Dublin RH.

**+SLOAN, Robert**

Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, 2nd Btn. Fusilier. 7013805. Died

19/07/1943. Aged 22. Son of John E. and Mary Sloan, of Belfast. Cassino Memorial, Italy

**+WHITE, William Robert**

Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, 2nd Btn. Corporal. 6981318. Died 19/07/1943. Aged 30. Son of Richard and Ann White; husband of Annie E. White, of Belfast. Catania War Cemetery, Sicily, Italy.

**+WILSON, William**

Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, 2nd Btn. Lance Corporal. 6984198. Died 19/07/1943. Aged 22. Son of Robert and Elizabeth Wilson; husband of Susan Wilson, of Portstewart. Catania War Cemetery, Sicily, Italy.

**+WYLIE, Samuel David**

Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, 2nd Btn. Fusilier. 6980359. Died 19/07/1943. Aged 21. Son of Joseph and Susan Wylie; husband to Jeannie Wylie, of Dungannon. Catania War Cemetery, Sicily, Italy.

**1944**

**+EVANS, Charles William**

RAF. Sergeant. 537311. Died 19/07/1944. Aged 26. Son of Joseph W. B. Evans and Helen Evans; Husband to Elizabeth Montgomery Evans of Belfast. Belfast City Cemetery, Glenalina Section

**+HOLT, Alwyn Evelyn Stuart**

RAFVR. Flight Sergeant (Navigator). 1795306. Died 19/07/1944. Aged 21. 207 Sqdn. QUB. Son of the Revd. Felix Holt and Margaret Isabel Holt, of Charles Street

Manse, Ballymoney. Margny Communal Cemetery, Marne, France. QUB WM

**+LAPPIN, Robert George**

RAFVR. Sergeant. 2210592. Died 19/07/1944. Age 22. 207 Sqdn. Son of Robert George and Mary Lappin, Belfast. Margny Communal Cemetery, Marne, France

**+McBRIDE, James Adair**

Royal Ulster Rifles. 2nd Btn. Lance Serjeant. 7012157. Died 19/07/1944. Age 30. Son of Mr. and Mrs. John McBride, of Strandtown, Belfast, Banneville-La-Campagne War Cemetery, France

**+ORR, Robert John Dillon**

Royal Ulster Rifles. 2nd Btn. Lance Corporal. 7022204. Died 19/07/1944. Aged 20. Son of James and Margaret Orr, of Empire Street, Belfast. La Delivrande War Cemetery, near Luc-sur-Mer in Normandy.

**+SHAW, Frederick**

King's Own Scottish Borderers. 1st Btn. Lance Corporal. 7018861. Died 19/07/1944. Age 22. Son of John Shaw, Harryville, Ballymena. Banneville-La-Campagne War cemetery, France.

**+STEVENSON, James Ernest**

Royal Ulster Rifles. 2nd Btn. Lance Serjeant. 7011810. Died 19/07/1944. Age 32. Son of Mr. and Mrs. James Stevenson, of Cregagh, Belfast. Banneville-La-Campagne War Cemetery, France

## VETERANS

### **BALMER, Bill**

RM. Born in Coleraine on 12th July, 1922, son of William and Annie in Adams Place, which is opposite the Union St., Orange Hall. Eden Elementary School. Worked for Boyds Engineering, Bendooragh. Inspired by his father's account of the Royal Marines at Gallipoli, he enlisted and travelled to Deal. Due to the onset of war in September 1939, training was condensed. Engagements at Boulogne and Calais followed. Taken prisoner 26/04/1940 and marched into Germany to Stalag VIII -B where the prisoners were made to work 12 hour days. Liberated 02/05/1945.

Married Elizabeth Anne McKinney 15/03/1947. In 1949 he volunteered for and completed the Commando course and was posted to Malaya with 3 Commando Brigade. After tours in Malta and North Africa, he completed his service on 11/07/1953. He then completed 31 years as a postman covering a daily route of 22 miles each day. Served in the RUSC and later joined UDR serving from 1972 - 79.

Chairman of Ballymoney Branch RBL 1972 - 79. His wife was awarded the Legion's Award Bar for outstanding service to the Women's Section. In 2004 a book titled, "My service life" written by Ronnie Gamble, was published. Brother of Andy, Mary, Nettie and Annie. His funeral was from St. Patrick's Parish Church to Ballymoney Cemetery. - Based on a report in Ballymoney Times, 19/07/2011.

### **CHARLES, Andrew      MM.19/07/1944**

One of the last known veterans of Operation Neptune (D-Day) passed away in 2022. Born and raised in Desertmartin,

County Londonderry, he was determined to serve King and Country at the outbreak of the Second World War. At 15, he joined the Home Guard and then, when he turned 17, signed up with the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers. He later served with the Royal Ulster Rifles.

At 10 am on 06/06/1944, Andy waded ashore onto Sword beach and, like thousands of Ulstermen, would take part in fighting around the beach bridgeheads, Cambes Wood and then the liberation of Caen.

Andy was awarded the Military Medal for his actions on 19 July, north-west of Troarn.

The citation reads;

On 19th July, 1944, the Bn [Battalion] attacked the Brickworks North West of TROARN. The above mentioned Rifleman [Andrew Charles] was No. 1 of a Bren Gun in the platoon of "B" Company which was to secure the most forward position. Having fought its way to its objective, the platoon found that 75 yards away two enemy 75 mm guns were in action against them. The Pl[atoon] Comd [Commander] immediately put in an attack with only a few men, which attack captured the guns.

Rifleman Charles was one of the men. He unhesitatingly crossed an open road under intense fire in an endeavour to fire on the guns from a hedgerow. This he was unable to do, so he took up an exposed position in a field only 50 yards from the position in a field of 50 yards from the enemy guns and in face of heavy opposition maintained steady fire on them, enabling the guns to be captured and assisting in



wounding or killing one enemy crew, and causing the other crew to retreat.

Rifleman Charles then advanced to another exposed position, still under heavy fire, and maintained fire on the enemy who had retreated to a strong dug in position, despite his Section Commander being wounded. He carried out his duty until ordered to withdraw by his platoon commander.

Rifleman Charles is a very young soldier who showed great determination and courage in the face of heavy enemy fire.

The recommendation was signed by Field Marshal Bernard Montgomery, whom Andy met in Holland in September 1944, to be presented with his Military Medal.

Andy survived the war and settled in Magherafelt, where he married and had a family, establishing his own mini museum about the Second World War.

He was a proud member of Cranny Heroes LOL No. 1015

On the afternoon, 19th July 2019, the Grand Master Most Wor. Bro. Edward Stevenson together with County Londonderry GOL Officers and Cranny LOL No. 1015 Officers visited Bro. Andrew Charles M.M. to commemorate the 75th Anniversary of him being decorated by Field Marshal Montgomery with the Military Medal on the 19th July 1944.

Bro. Charles M.M. was presented with a celebration cake, a GOLI Service and Sacrifice commemorative tie and the Grand Master also presented Bro. Charles M.M. With a Long Service Certificate for 75 years of being a member of

the Loyal Orange Institution with Cranny Heroes LOL No. 1015."Congratulations and Thank You for your Faithful and Dedicated Service to our Country and to the Loyal Orange Institution".

**RUSSELL, Harold Rodney**

RNVR. Midshipman. WW1. Served 1939-45 as Captain, Inniskillen Fusiliers. Born 09/04/1900. Died 19/07/1953. Son of Nelson Russell, Strathmore, Lisburn. Campbell College 1295

**TOWNSEND, George Patrick Donald**

Lieutenant Commander. DSC. Temporary Lieutenant Commander (London Gazette 03/12/1944). HMS Ulster Queen, anti-aircraft ship on Artic convoys. Ulster Queen provided AA cover for convoy PQ18 from Iceland to Kola Inlet and Murmansk. It endured the largest number of air attacks of any of the Russian convoys. Lieutenant. HMS Shearwater 01/09/1939 (Navy List 19/07/1940).  
Donaghadee

***Representing their comrades who died on this day***

**Every Day is a Remembrance Day**

***We will remember them***

# remembrance ni

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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](mailto:houstonmckelvey@mac.com)

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