



remembrance ni

Frank McClarty - Ballycastle hero beaten by epidemic

The McClarty family headstone, Ramoan Parish Church



The first-born son of William John and Mary Agnes Coyles McClarty, Frank served with distinction with the 12th Btn, Royal Irish Rifles, during World War I.

He was the recipient of the Military Medal, awarded to a non-commissioned soldier for acts of gallantry and devotion to duty under fire, and the Belgian Croix de Guerre, which could only be earned by foreign nationals for acts of heroism conducted while on Belgian soil. Rifleman McClarty (a.k.a., McLarty /M'Clarty), who was promoted to Lance

Corporal, returned home from the battlefield to die from pulmonary tuberculosis, which killed 117,000 people in 1913 alone and was an all-too-common bacterial infection especially rampant in the military.

It was in his hometown, with friends who had known him since childhood, several notables, and his mother and brother in attendance, that he received a hero's burial. Frank was survived by his mother, Mary Agnes and his brother, William John, who served with the Royal Dublin Fusiliers during WWI. He was preceded in death by his father, William John (1870-1900); his younger sister, Annie (1898-1917); and brother, Patrick (1900-1900).

Ramoan Parish Church WW1 Roll of Honour contains 112 names.

It was compiled in July 1918, by the then curate of the parish, The Rev. R.J. Black, B.A., R.U.I. Of the 112 who served, 17 made the supreme sacrifice, 3 received the Legion of Honour, 4 the D.S.O., 1 the Croix de Guerre [Francis J. McClarty], 2 the M.C, and 3 the M.M. [including Francis J. McClarty]. In addition to these decorations one received the M.B.E., one the O.B.E., and one the C.B.

Tributes to 36th (Ulster) Division

"The record of the Thirty-Sixth Division will ever be the pride of Ulster. At Theipval in the battle of the Somme on July 1st, 1916; at Wytschaete on June 17th, 1917, in the storming of the Messines Ridge; on the Canal du Nord, in the attack on the Hindenburg Line of November 20th same year; on March 21, 1918, near Fontaine-les-Clercs, defending their positions long after they were isolated and surrounded by

the enemy; and later in the month at Andechy in the days of 'backs to the wall', they acquired a reputation for conduct and devotion deathless in military history of the United Kingdom, and repeatedly signalled in the despatches of the Commander-in-Chief." - Sir Winston Churchill

"Whether town dweller or country lad, volunteer or regular, officer or other rank, Catholic or Protestant, the Sons of Ulster knew a comradeship and a trust in adversity that should be a lesson to us all." - Richard Doherty, military historian and author, Londonderry

Acknowledgments - Biography of Frank McClarty above by his great niece. Photos by Soul Searcher.

Portadown Desert Rat was POW in Italy and Germany

Known as 'Paddy' to those he served alongside in the Royal Tank Regiment, this is the story of Sergeant Alexander Liggett's time in World War Two with the Desert Rats.

The Royal Armoured Corps in North Africa

On 17th June 1941, Alexander Liggett, 7877628, went missing in action during the Western Desert Campaign near Libya. The 7th Armoured Division were part of intense fighting in North Africa at the time. Liggett's name appears on a casualty list for the day. Casualty number 566 reported to the War Office Casualty Section. Less than 24 hours later at 0900hrs, he was back in action. This action was part of the withdrawal from the disastrous 'Operation Battleaxe' offensive. This retreat began on 17th June 1941 – the day Liggett was recorded as missing. Seven weeks before, his

wife Kathleen received an aerogramme saying Sergeant Liggett was “fit and well”.

Allied tanks overwhelmed

Rommel took the withdraw of the 2nd and 6th RTR as a sign that the British left flank was crumbling and on the night of 16th June, he concentrated both the German 15th Panzer and 5th Light Divisions and struck hard at the left flank of the 7th Armoured Division.

The German attack started at 0430 hrs with 75 tanks supported by artillery and smashed straight through the Division's lines, with the Germans heading for the crux of the battle at Halfaya Pass. The 4th Indian Division had been pushed out of Sollum and was ordered to withdraw along the coastal plain. At Fort Capuzzo 22nd Guards Brigade were nearly trapped by the advance and General Creagh ordered the surviving tanks of both 4th and 7th Armoured Brigades to fight a defensive battle.

Ably supported by the Support Group, the British tanks fought a six-hour battle, which gave time for the 22nd Guards Brigade and the 4th Indian Division to withdraw successfully. When he found out that his trap had been unsuccessful Rommel was furious. Supported by RAF bombers XIII Corps was in retreat and 17th June 7th Armoured Division was back in Sofafi, where it had started from three days before.

Desert Rats' Website - Battleaxe became a byword for blundering

Morale was not good in North Africa. The corps lost almost 1,000 casualties and 91 tanks. This included 122 killed, 588

wounded and 259 missing. 58 Matilda tanks and 29 cruisers were out of action. In fact, 81% of the British tanks were out of commission after only three days of the offensive starting. By comparison, the Germans lost just 12 tanks over the same period.

A prisoner in Italy

In 1943, Sergeant Alexander Liggett entered POW Camp No. 53, Urbisaglia Macerata, postmark number 3300. The camp became known as Sforza Costa.

Sforza Costa lay by a railway twelve miles south of Macerata in the Marche region on Italy's east coast. The camp stood on the western edge of the town about a mile from the railway station. The modern building was a sugar beet refinery but opened as a prisoner of war camp in 1942.

The camp layout was capital E-shaped and constructed of thick concrete. The middle section contained the entrance through a large archway. The north and south wings were tall storage buildings used to hold captured men on one floor with no dividing walls.

The camp stood in a six-acre open area, surrounded by a no man's land of 15' between a 10' inner fence and a 30' outer fence. Coils of barbed wire topped both fences. Every fifty yards stood a wooden sentry post with a machine gun armed guard.

Life in an Italian POW Camp

A Blackshirt Colonel ran the camp. He had taken part in Mussolini's "March on Rome". While most of the officers were elderly, they received help from the local Carabinieri. There were two interpreters in the camp when Sergeant

Liggett was there. The first, known as “Harry’s Brother” was a waiter, caught in the wrong place at the wrong time. He had worked at the Savoy Hotel. The second, known by “Wee Jock” was from a respected Glaswegian ice-cream selling family. He had returned to Italy for his grandmother’s funeral.

In 1942 and 1943, the number of inmates rose from around 2,000 to over 8,000. The camp was not designed for this many people. There was only one toilet block with a dozen “squatters” and three running water standpipes.

Sergeant William Cooper provided details of the camp. He also claimed the British administration were “too friendly” with the Italian guards. The higher ranking officers were able to smuggle in food and wine for themselves. Those in the lower ranks could never smuggle in escape equipment or radios. When the Italians withdrew from the Axis in 1943, British administration even offered to take over. They would stand guard over their own men until replacement troops arrived.

A great Italian escape

Alexander Liggett escaped from Sforza Costa in 1943. It’s likely he escaped along with around 1,000 other inmates on 15th September 1943. They took their chance to walk straight out of the camp while unguarded. The Italian guards left after their country surrendered. It took several days for German guards to replace them.

Lenn Dann talks of the escape in his book “Laugh – We Ran”. He claims the British officers paraded their men in the recreation field on the day the Italians left. A senior officer spoke of separate peace and warned them there was no

need for “bloody silly heroics”. Those who ignored his plea made their escape after their evening meal. They had no idea when they would next get a chance to eat.

The prisoners of Sforza Costa had similar stories. Many found themselves captured in North Africa during the Tobruk campaign. This was one reason for the swell in numbers in 1942. Those who fled the camp in 1943, headed for the mountainous countryside. Italian families in rural areas gave them a warm welcome. They fed and clothed the men and in some cases gave them work and a bed for several weeks.

A letter written from Sergeant Alexander Liggett to his wife Kathleen in 1943. Photo from the Edgar family archives.

A letter from Sergeant Liggett

8th Letter. Dearest Kathleen here is another letter to you. I'm still going strong, but I still wait for a first letter from you, and of course I've had no parcels yet. Still, I've got nothing else to do so I can wait.

One of our chaps has died here and he had a lovely funeral. All the soldiers lined the road and some of them walked behind the coffin. It was very impressive. He was married 18 months ago in England. He was only with his wife about a fortnight before he went out to the East. It's pretty hard lines on her and his mother, still it's the war and these things will happen.

[Censored]

There is nothing more to say in this letter as nothing ever happens here. I still love you as dearly and I'm longing for the time when we can be together again. I'm always thinking

of you sweetheart and I'm always talking to other chaps about you. I'm very proud of my wife. I've got no photos. Will you send some darling? You can send in an ordinary letter costing five pence.

Cheerio darling. xx Alex xx.

8th March 1943.

A fellow escapee, Terry Moriarty, wrote to Liggett's family to let them know he was alive and well after the escape. Many of those who escaped in Italy were later recaptured and detained in the Stalags of Germany. Stalag IVD and IVG in Muhlberg on the river Elbe became infamous. This is not where they war would end for Sergeant Alexander Liggett.

Taken again in Germany

The Germans imprisoned Sergeant Liggett again in 1945 and held him in Muhlberg's Stalag IVB. Stammlager 4B was north of Dresden. It operated for the duration of the war from October 1939 to September 1945. IVB was the largest prisoner of war camp on German soil.

This camp differed to the Italian prison. It held over 10,000 men in a rectangular 1.0km by 0.5km compound. A central avenue divided the camp in two. Today, the area is a dense forest. Ruins of latrines still hide among the trees. There are also carved stones dedicated to the memory of those who did not survive the horrors of the camp. Stalag IVB also served as a Soviet Gulag and held German prisoners after the war's end.

Dearest Kathleen it's now four months since I heard from you and I don't think you are getting any from me but I'll keep on dropping a line just in case one gets through.

I've made you another remittance of £20 and I hope you get them both, that is, one from me for £15 and this last one for £20. When you get it give five to my mother and tell her to buy something for herself. Cheerio darling. All my love, Alex.

Postcard sent from Stalag IVB on 3rd February 1945.

Sergeant Liggett and The Desert Rats

263765 was the number given to Sergeant Alexander Liggett in Stalag IVB. Those numbered alongside him served in the Durham Light Infantry. Their 15th Battalion had amalgamated with the Royal Armoured Corps in 1942 forming the 155th Regiment. This regiment would press towards the Elbe and take Hamburg in May 1945.

The three men were likely captured together in north-west Germany. German resistance around Hamburg was strong, particularly around Jesteburg. The Wehrmacht would place bombs under bridges to slow down the Allied armoured divisions.

Prisoner 263763 was Sergeant JW McGeogh (4450445). His comrade Corporal D Cameron (4460524) became prisoner 263764. These men would have served together in the 5th Royal Tank Regiment and 155th Royal Armoured Corps. This infamous group was the 7th Armoured Division; The Desert Rats. We can track the progress of Sergeant Liggett from Egypt in 1940, through France in 1944 and on to victory in Hamburg in 1945.

After the war

Two months after the war ended, Sergeant Liggett was demobbed and returned to civilian life. Like many POWs, he was undernourished and was placed on a special diet. On

his return to Portadown, he worked at Wilson's Canning Factory on Castle Avenue. He would later work in the Post Office sorting office for 27 years until his retirement. After this, he briefly worked in security at Craigavon House until his 70s.

He was well-known in Portadown from Shamrock Park Social Club to Armagh Road Church. He was also a member of Corcrair Purple Rocket LOL 339 and Kilmoriarty Royal Black Preceptory 267. Alexander Liggett lived at 12 Granville Square, Portadown with his wife Kathleen and son Joshua. He died aged 77 after an illness in Craigavon Area Hospital.

On this Day – November 29



1909

The Battlecruiser HMS LION is laid down on the slipway in the South Yard of HMNB Davenport, Plymouth. She would famously become Admiral Beatty's flagship during the

battles of Dogger Bank and Jutland and was the first warship to cost more than £2 Million.

1916

Admiral Sir John Jellicoe announced First Sea Lord, and Admiral Sir David Beatty Commander-in-Chief of Grand Fleet.

1939

The USSR forces Soviet citizenship on all residents of Polish territory under their control.

1940

German High Command issues draft plan for invasion of Russia.

British and New Zealand troops under General Freyberg occupy the whole of the Greek island of Crete in the Mediterranean.

1941



18-year-old Soviet partisan Zoya Kosmodemyanskaya is executed by hanging after she was caught for arson,

burning German houses and stables in Petrischevo. Her last words: "Farewell, comrades! Fight, do not be afraid! Stalin is with us! Stalin will come!"

Depleted by continuous savage fighting, blizzards and sub-zero temperatures, Army Group Centre's offensive begins to grind to a halt as German units find it increasingly difficult to make ground. The Russians launch a counter-attack at Rostov-on-Don, forcing the German to evacuate the city and withdraw west towards the river Mius.

Italians counterattack near Sidi Rezegh, Libya, and almost destroy New Zealand unit.

1942

Prime Minister Churchill warns the Italian government that RAF bombing of Italian cities will continue until Italy abandons the war.

British paratroops drop south of Tunis.

Coffee rationing begins in the United States.

1943

The Irish Brigade and the 4th Armoured Division attacked the German Army at the Battle of Sangro River, Italy. The tanks were held up by mines at first so the Inniskillings & Irish Fusiliers took their objective & broke the German winter line.

The Australians chase the retreating Japanese towards Wareo in New Guinea.

US VI Corps launches assault north of Mignano Gap in Italy.

1944 Russian troops cross Danube into southwest Hungary, making large gains.

The submarine USS Archerfish sinks Japanese carrier Shinano on her maiden voyage.

German spies Willam Colepaugh and Erich Gimpel are landed by U-1230 at Hancock Point Maine, USA, both are arrested by 01/01/1945.

1945

Films of concentration camp atrocities are shown at the Nuremberg trials.

Roll of Honour – November 29

Representing their comrades who died on this day

1914

+MOORE, Robert James

Royal Irish Fusiliers. 1st Btn. Private. 8403. Died 29/11/1914. Age 28. Husband to Lucy Lillian Moore of Hill Street Lurgan. Ploegsteert Memorial, Armagh 1915

1915

+MAGILL, Robert James

Royal Irish Rifles Service. 6th Btn. Rifleman. 11012. Died 29/11/1915. From Larne. Dorian Memorial, Greece

1916

+SHAW, Thomas

Royal Irish Rifles. 11th Btn. Rifleman. 18/724. Died 29/11/1916. Age 30. Son of John and Mary Shaw, of Clough, Co. Antrim. Boulogne Eastern Cemetery, France

1917

+BOOTH, Benjamin

Royal Fusiliers, 23rd Bn. att'd. 2nd Bn. London Regiment (Royal Fusiliers). Private. G/67222. Died 29/11/1917. From Larne. Cologne Southern Cemetery, Nordrhein-Westfalen, Germany

+BOYLE, J

Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers. 2nd Btn. Private. 29187. Died 29/11/1917. Born Whiteabbey 11/12/1889. Enlisted Port Glasgow. His father Patrick was a flax rougher. His mother Annie (nee Maguire) Boyle lived at 16 Main St., Whiteabbey. Dozinghem Military Cemetery, Belgium

+BROLLY, Henry

Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, 5th Btn. B Coy. Private. 4/29314. Died 29/11/1917. Age 28. Son of Michael Brolly, of Londonderry. Ramleh War Cemetery, Israel

+ELLISON, Robert Arthur Alexander

Lancashire Fusiliers. 16th Btn. C Coy. Corporal . 11575. Died 29/11/1917. Age 23. Son of Robert and Agnes Ellison, of 4, Albyns Avenue, Cheetham Hill Rd., Manchester. Native

of Belfast. Haringhe (Bandaghem) Military Cemetery, Belgium

+FRIZZELL, Joseph

Machine Gun Corps (Infantry), 87th Coy. Private. 24189. Formerly with the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers. Died of wounds 29/11/1917. Age 44. Joseph was born in Dungannon about 1873. He was a native of Castlecaulfield. He later moved to Arundel Street Belfast. Rocquigny-Equancourt Road British Cemetery, Manancourt, France

+McCARTNEY, James

Household Battalion. Trooper. 2729. Died 24/11/1917. Aged 23. Son of James and Martha McCartney, of Newtowncrommelin. Brother of William, died 29/09/1918, aged 22 years, whose body lies in France. Newtowncrommelin Presbyterian Churchyard, Co. Antrim

+O'CONNELL, Michael

Labour Corps. 191st Coy. Private 424799. Died 29/11/1917. Age 32. Formerly 7/8400, Royal Irish Rifles, 7th Btn. Son of Sarah O'Connell, Cushendall. Haringhe (Bandaghem) Cemetery, West-Vlaanderen, Belgium.

+WILLMOTT, William Charles

Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers. 1st Btn. CQMS. 8894. Died 29/11/1917. Age 28. Son of Mr. and Mrs. Willmott, of 52, Landseer Rd., Upper Holloway, London; husband of Ada Gertrude Willmott, of 40, Hollinhall St., Greenacres, Oldham. Rocquig

1918

+FULLERTON, Matthew

Royal Engineers. 2nd Signal Group, Driver. 23630. Died 29/11/1918. Age 22. Son of Matthew and Agnes Fullerton, of Belfast. Terlincthun British Cemetery, Wimille, France

+McCULLOUGH, James Edmond

Canadian Infantry. 78th Btn. Private. 234236. Died 29/11/1918. Age 34. Born in Armagh. The family moved to Liverpool and later emigrated to Canada. Enlisted with Canadian forces and disembarked in France at the end of 1916. He was wounded in 1917 and spent time in a hospital in England before returning to action. He was wounded again in August 1918 but died from his wounds and pneumonia in hospital in Bristol. Son of the late Mr. and Mrs. James McCullough, of California, U.S.A. West Derby Cemetery, Liverpool

+McKEOWN, John

Royal Irish Rifles. 16th Bn. B Coy. Rifleman. 63. Died 29/11/1918. Age 21. Son of the late Valentine and Charlotte McKeown, of Banoge, Donaghcloney, Co. Down. Berlin South-Western Cemetery, Germany

1919

+McLARTY, Frank

Royal Irish Rifles. 12th Btn. Lance Corporal. M.M. C de G. Died 29/11/1919. Age 24. Son of Mary Agnes McLarty, Railway Street, Ballycastle. Ramoan Parish Church Graveyard, Ballycastle

1940

+CARSON, John Leadbetter

RAF. Sergeant. 543418. Died 29/10/1940. Aged 21. 201 Squadron. Son of Robert and Elizabeth Carson of Whitehead. Carnmoney Parish Church RH. Family Memorial Carnmoney C of I Churchyard.

+MAGEE, Louis Edward

RAF. Sergeant. 581233. Died 29/11/1940. Aged 24. 59 Sqdn. Son of Joseph Thomas Magee and Mary Clare Magee, of Dublin, Republic of Ireland. Runnymede Memorial, Surrey. 502 (Ulster) Squadron WM, St Anne's Cathedral, Belfast

1941

+GREEN, James

RAFVR. Aircraftman 2nd Class. 1007141. Died 29/11/1941. Aged 31. 968 Balloon Squadron. Husband to Matilda Green of Belfast. Carnmoney Cemetery

+IRVINE, Francis

Australian Infantry, 2/13 Btn. Private. NX35486. Died 29/11/1941. Aged 36. Son of Francis and Elizabeth Irvine, of Tempo. Tobruk War Cemetery.

+SLOAN, James

New Zealand Infantry. 24th Btn. Private. 25376. Died 29/11/1941. Aged 36. Son of Jackson and Sarah Jane Sloan, of Ballinlea, Co. Antrim. Halfaya Sollum War Cemetery, Egypt

1942

+COOKE, George Moore

RAFVR. Aircraftman 1st Class. 1053837. Died 29/11/1942. Aged 21. Son of Mr. and Mrs. John D. Cooke of Belfast. Belfast City Cemetery, Glenalina Section

+IRVINE, Robert

RAFVR . (W.Op./Air Gnr). 1119371. Died 28/11/1942. Aged 21. 95 Sqdn. Coastal Command. Son of Robert D. and Emma Irvine, of Belfast. Freetown (King Tom) Cemetery, South Africa

+TAYLOR, James Hector

Royal Artillery. Lance Serjeant. 7018920. Died 28/11/1942. Aged 30. 4/2 Maritime Regt. Son of Mr. and Mrs. James Taylor; husband to Elizabeth McDowell Taylor (nee Gitty), of Ballymoney. Portsmouth Naval Memorial, Panel 72

1943

+CARROLL Robert

RAFVR. Aircraftman Second Class. 1098479. Died 29/11/1943. 211 Sqdn. The squadron was one of several sent to the Far East after Japan entered World War 2. POW Death. Died aboard Suez Maru sunk in Java by US Submarine Bonefish. Japanese Captain Kawano orders the shooting of the prisoners in the water. From 1415 – 1630 the Minesweeper W.12 massacres the survivors using machine gun and rifles. No survivors. Singapore Memorial, Kranji War Cemetery, Singapore

+FIFE, William Charles

Royal Ulster Rifles, 2nd Bn. The London Irish Rifles.
Corporal. 7021381. Died 29/11/1943. Age 20. Sangro River
War Cemetery, Italy

+GREGG, John Francis Fitzgerald

RAF. Flying Officer. 116815. Died 29/11/1943. Aged 40.
POW Death. Died aboard Suez Maru sunk in Java by US
Submarine Bonefish. Japanese Captain Kawano orders the
shooting of the prisoners in the water. From 1415 – 1630 the
Minesweeper W.12 massacres the survivors using machine
gun and rifles. No survivors. Son of the Most Revd. John
Allen Fitzgerald Gregg, D.D., Archbishop of Armagh and
Primate of all Ireland, and of Anna Alicia Gregg, of The
Palace, Armagh. B.A.(Cantab.), Scholar of Christ's College.
Singapore Memorial, Kranji War Cemetery, Singapore.
Malaya Civil Service WM, St Andrews Cathedral, Singapore

+LINDSAY, William

Royal Irish Fusiliers. 1st Btn. Fusilier. 7010670. Died
29/11/1943. Aged 33. Son of Joseph and Emily Lindsay, of
Lisburn. Sangro River War Cemetery, Italy

+McGUINNESS, Robert

RAFVR. Aircraftman. 1st Class. 978073. Died 29/11/1943. Age
20. Japanese PoW on one of the Maru ships which were sunk
by Allies. (See Gregg above). Son of James and Mary
McGuinness, of Belfast. Singapore Memorial, Column 428,
Singapore

+ROBERTS, John

Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, 6th Btn. Fusilier. 2190664. Died
29/11/1943. Age 31. Son of Thomas Henry and Florence

Roberts; husband to Josephine Roberts, of Limavady.
Cassino Memorial, Italy

1944

+SYMINGTON, George Alexander

RAF. Squadron Leader. 44436. Died 29/11/1944. Age 44.
Son of Robert And Jane Symington; Husband to Elizabeth
Symington, of Antrim. Heliopolis War Cemetery, Egypt

VETERANS

DUNNE, Arthur Gordon

RN. Special Entry. Full career from Cadet to Commander
1944 - 1980. Mentioned in despatches. HMS Anson, HMS
Welcome, Pacific, 1945. Lieutenant. Served off Korea and
Malaya during period March, 1951 - February, 1953. Born
29/11/1926. Son of R. Dunne, Ormiston Drive,
Belfast. Campbell College 2962. St. Columba's Parish
Church, Knock RH

JOHNSTON, William Humphrey

RN. His time in the Royal Navy included a stint on the
degaussing ship HMS Springdale. Born on 29/11/1925. Son
of George Johnston and Mary Johnston (née Leaden) of
Belfast. His father, George died when William was 5 or 6
years old. William had three elder siblings in Belfast.
Margaret born in 1912, Matthew born in 1914, and George
born in 1922. George died at sea during World War Two, his
death happening off Cromer, Norfolk on 15/03/1942. He also
had two younger brothers; Stanley born in 1929, and
Joseph born in 1931.

LEWIS, Clive Staples

Somerset Light Infantry, Lieutenant

Clive Staples Lewis was born in Belfast on 29/11/1898. As a child, he was fascinated with animals and wrote and illustrated stories. In 1902, his dog, Jacksie was killed and he adopted the animal's name being thereafter known as Jack to his friends and family. After the death of his mother when he was ten, Lewis was shunted back and forth between schools and tutors in England and Ireland before gaining a scholarship to University College, Oxford.



Lewis had hardly begun his studies when he enlisted into the University Officer Training Corps and, still only 18 was commissioned into the Somerset Light Infantry. As an Irishman he could have avoided

conscription but, in common with most of his peers, he felt it his duty to enlist. Lewis wrote of his fellow cadets: "Those who are to be commissioned from the ranks are jolly good chaps, clean, honest and good natured. Our own set, the public school and varsity men, have our faults and merits already ascertained. The third group are cads and fools, they drop their h's, spit on the stairs and talk about what they will do when they get to the front – where of course

none of them have been.” Lewis entered into a pact with his best friend, Edward Moore that if either were killed the other would look after the friend’s one remaining parent. So it was that, after Moore was killed in action in March 1918, Lewis took care of his mother, Jane, for the remaining 33 years of her life. Indeed, after moving Jane into the family home he often referred to her as ‘mother’.

Lewis arrived at the front to join the 1st Battalion on his nineteenth birthday and settled in easily. His Platoon Sergeant, Harry Ayres, taught him about the unwritten ‘live



and let live’ pact at the Front. After Lewis suggested firing rifle grenades at the enemy trenches a few metres away the reply was: “once ‘ee start doing that kind of thing, ‘ee’ll get zummit back, zee!” During the March 1918 German offensive, the Somersets counter-attacked and Lewis took the surrender of 60 prisoners. However, during

the latter stages of the operation, Lewis was wounded by a stray British shell, which killed the men on either side of him including Sergeant Ayres. Lewis later wrote: “I was a futile officer (they gave commissions too easily then), a puppet moved about by him – he was like a father to me.” Lewis was wounded in several places by shrapnel most of which was removed save for one piece which remained in his chest for the rest of his life.

Lewis spent the remainder of the war in hospital and was demobbed on Christmas Eve 1918. After initially being refused a gratuity, he was, after lobbying by his father, finally awarded a small pension, enough to pay his way through university. The parsimony of the establishment caused him to reflect: “if we do get Bolshevism in England the treacherous and dishonest bureaucracy has earned it.”

Lewis became friendly with fellow Oxford Don and war veteran J R R Tolkien and their literary career flourished in parallel. Lewis wrote more than 30 books including the best-selling Chronicles of Narnia which are inspired by the Mountains of Mourne. During the Second World War he tried to enlist but was offered work at the ministry of Propaganda which he rejected, not wishing to “tell lies” serving instead in the Oxford Home Guard. Indeed, Lewis’s wariness of authority caused him to turn down the CBE he was to have been awarded in 1951.

C S Lewis died on 22/11/1963, a few days short of his 65th birthday. Although he was one of the most published and accomplished authors of his day, his death almost passed without notice - being the same day as the assassination of President John F Kennedy.

His grandfather was Rector of Dundela, Belfast. There is a stained glass window in St Mark’s church donated by Lewis and his brother in memory of their parents. The boss on the door to the former rectory beside the church is in the shape of a lion’s head. The lion being the symbol of St Mark, and perhaps the inspiration of “The Lion, the witch and the wardrobe”

LIGGETT, Alexander Liggett

Royal Tank Regiment. Sergeant. 7877628. A Desert Rat who was taken prisoner of war twice in Italy and Germany. Died 29/11/1986. See article above.

McKENNA, Hugh Patrick McKenna

7th and 7/8th (Service) Battalions Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers. Captain Hugh was born near Ballymoney, Co. Antrim in 1894 and was commissioned in 1915. He embarked for France in February 1916 and saw action at Ginchy, Messines and Langemarck. He was captured along with most of the rest of the battalion at Lempire on the opening day of the German Spring Offensive, 21/03/1918. Hugh was held at Hesepe POW camp near Hanover and repatriated on 28/11/1918.

WATT, William Robert

Sergeant. Served with the 2nd Battalion Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, 2nd Battalion, during World War Two. He was born in 1914 in Belfast. He died on 28/11/2002.

**Every day is a Remembrance
Day**

We will remember them

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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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