remembrance ni

Sir William Tyrell, Irish rugby international, British Lion, Army and RAF medical officer

Air Vice Marshal Sir William Tyrrell KBE, DSO, MC, MB, LLD, who died on 29/04/1968 served in both World Wars.

In WW1 he served with RAMC. Captain. MC, C de G, DSO and bar, MiD six times.

Educated at Friends School, Lisburn, RBAI, and QUB.

He spent the best part of a decade at Queen's College attempting to qualify as a doctor.

However, he was particularly active in student politics and in sport, particularly rugby.

Between 1910 and 1914 he gained 23 international caps for Ireland.

William Tyrrell played his first rugby at a senior level for QUB RFC. In 1910 he played his first test for Ireland, which was against France at Parc des Princes on 28 March. He was selected for the 1910 British tour to South Africa, the first official such tour (in that it was sanctioned and selected by the four Home Nations official governing bodies). On his return, he continued to play for Ireland, playing nine tests in total and scoring 3 tries. His last international was Ireland v Wales at Belfast on 14 March 1914.

He served on the Western Front as Captain, 1914-1915, Lieutenant Colonel 1917, attached to 2nd Battalion Lancashire Fusiliers (12th Brigade, 4th Division and later 36th Division 1914-1915), commanding No1 Motor Ambulance Convoy 1915-1916, Deputy assistant director Medical services VIII Corps British Expeditionary force

1916, and Officer commanding 76th Field ambulance, 1917-1918.

His DSO citation reads:

‘For conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty when in charge of a line of evacuation. He worked continuously for six days and it was due to his gallantry, organization and energy that touch was maintained so efficiently with the brigades, and many casualties evacuated. He displayed great courage and coolness throughout, and inspired those under him by his fine example.’

He was seconded as Principal Medical Officer (PMO) to Headquarters Royal Air Force (RAF) with the Army of Occupation from 1918 to 1919. He continued to pursue a military career after the war. He was PMO Z Expedition Somaliland from 1919 to 1920. In 1920 he transferred to the RAF. He was the Senior Medical Officer in Basrah from 1922 to 1923.

In 1922 the War Office Committee of Enquiry Into "Shell-shock" published its final report providing an overview of the British experience of shell shock during the First World War. Tyrrell was a key contributor of evidence.

He gave evidence in his capacity as a medical expert but he also described his own experience of shell shock which he suffered as a consequence of being buried by a shell explosion during his service as a medical officer to the 2nd Battalion Lancashire Fusiliers (12th Brigade, 4th division) on the Western Front. Tyrrell stated that it was his belief that the major cause of shell shock could be ascribed to the repression of fear.[

It is generally accepted that he was instrumental in the organization and direction of the RAF, not only within its medical services but in general. Over the next twenty years he also served in Palestine and Cranwell and by 1939 he achieved the rank of Air Vice-Marshal, just as the 2nd World War broke out. He served in high administrative posts throughout the war.

On leaving the RAF he served as Director of Medical Services with the new commercial airline company BOAC until he retired in 1947.

Even in retirement he lived a busy life – he was a Governor at RBAI, president of the Belfast Old Instonians Association, QUB Services Club President in 1949, and President of the IRFU in 1950-1951.

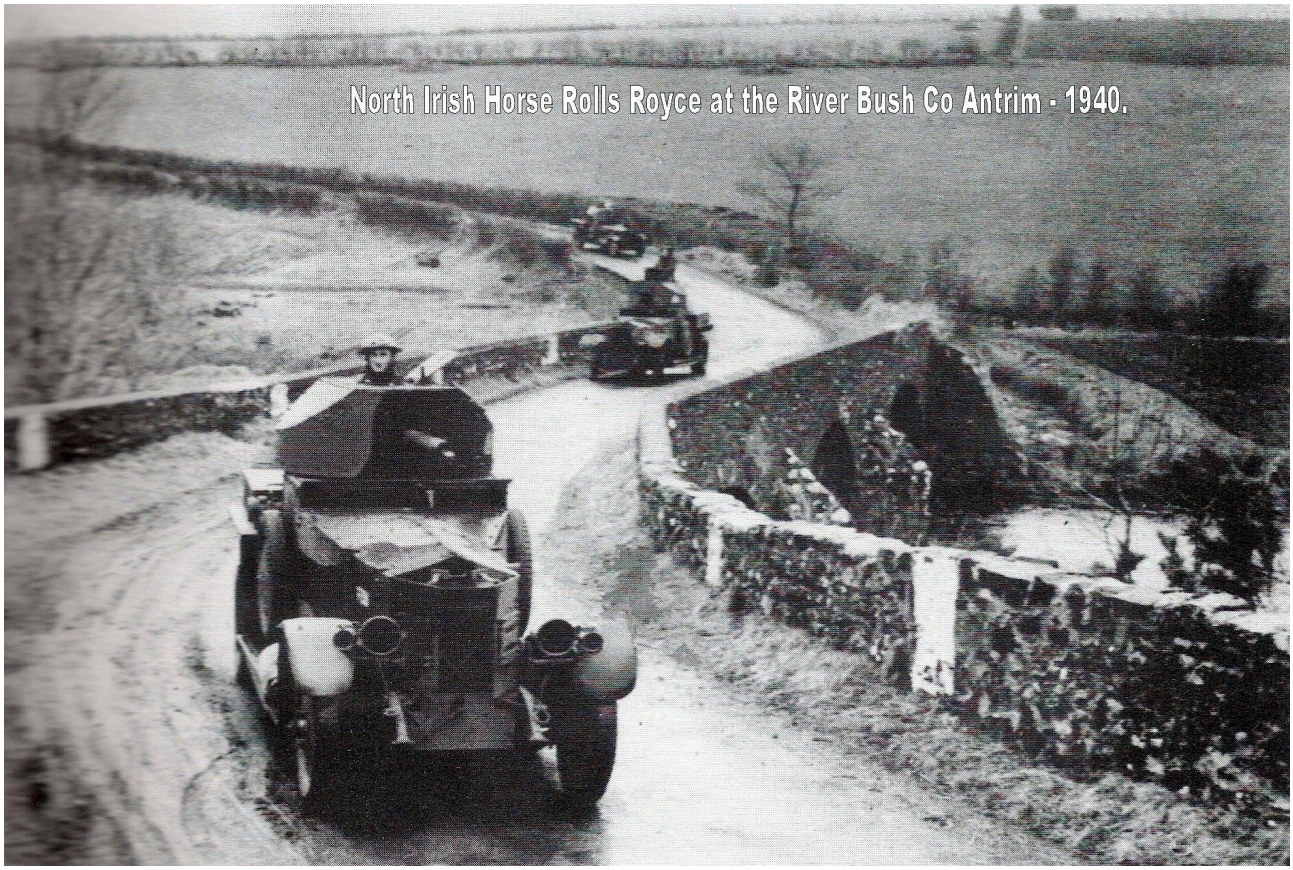
He was blighted by illness in the 1960s and he died on 29/04/1968, aged 83.

Two of his younger brothers, Marcus and Walter, both old boys of Inst, were killed in WW1 on active service with the Royal Flying Corps. In memory of his sons, Tyrell's father donated a silver cup, the Tyrell Cup, to the school, which he stipulated was to be awarded annually to the best cadet section within the RBAI Officer Training Corps, now the Combined Cadet Force.

On this Day – April 29

1940

King Haakon VII and his government are evacuated from Molde and taken to Tromso in northern Norway, from where they can continue the fight.



North Irish Horse on exercise River Bush 1940

HM Submarine Unity sank after colliding with Norwegian steamship Atle Jarle in thick fog off Blyth. 4 crew were lost, 23 rescued.

1941

British intelligence ‘Ultra’, intercept numerous messages giving a positive indication that the Germans plan to attack Crete.

Another Brigade from the British 10th Indian Division lands at Basra, ignoring Iraqi’s protests. The Iraqi Army lays siege to The RAF base at Habbaniyh, although RAF planes fly numerous air strikes against them.

1942

The Belgian resistance destroys Tenderloo chemical works, killing more that 250. Executions by the Germans reported to be running at 25-30 a month in Belgium.

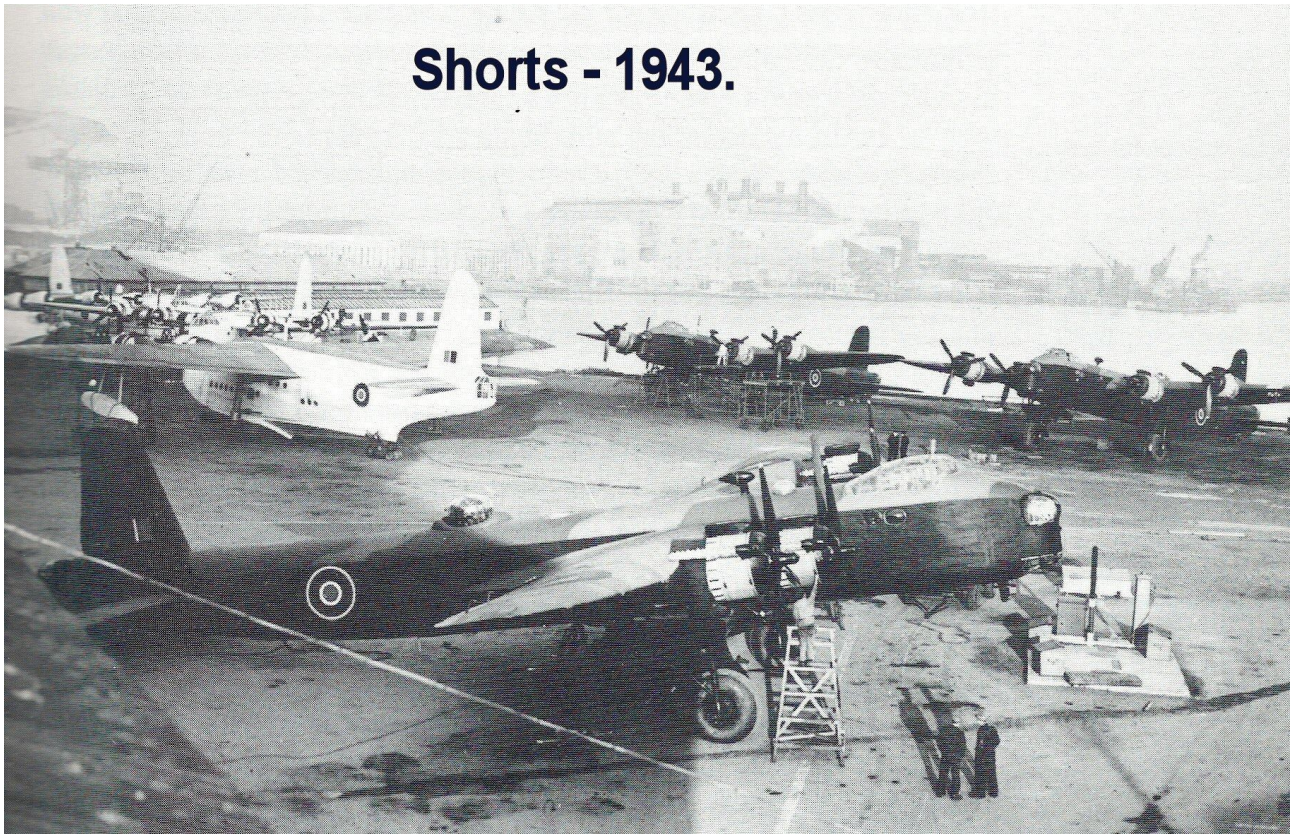
Japanese troops capture Lashio, thereby cutting the vital ‘Burma Road’ supply route into China.

The Japanese continue to land reinforcements on Mindanao Island as the step up attacks against the Filipino garrison. The shelling of Corregidor increases as the Japanese prepare to invade the Island.

1943

A series of minor attacks in near Novorossiysk drive the Germans back slowly.

U-boats begin a six-day attack on Convoy ONS5, during which 13 allied ships are finally sunk for the loss of six U-boats.



1944

Erick Hendrick Den Hollander crashed his Grumman Hellcat into the McCarroll family farm outside Ballymena, Co. Antrim.

HMCS Athabaskan was torpedoed and sunk in the English Channel. Most of the graves in the CWGC plot at Plouescat Communal Cemetery are of sailors belonging to this ship of the Royal Canadian Navy.

Curtin, the Australian Prime Minister arrives in London.

The US Navy pounds the Japanese base at Truk, destroying 120 planes.

1945
38 (Irish) Brigade - Brigadier Scott:

"The Army Commander sent us a special message recording his appreciation of the part we had played. In

addition, I sent personal messages to the Regiments of 2 Armoured Brigade & to other units of the Brigade Group thanking them for their work."

The RAF begin Operation ‘Manna’, the humanitarian food drop into an occupied and starving Netherlands

Convoy RA-66 sailing from the Kola Peninsula to Loch Ewe is attacked by at least 2 U-boats north of Kola. The British destroyer HMS Goodall, which was lend-leased by the US in 1943 is sunk by U-286 (Oblt.z.S. Willi Dietrich), for 1,150

tons, marking this as the last convoy to come under attack in the war.

The British Second Army crosses the Elbe near Hamburg, less than 100 miles west of the Russian forces in Mecklenburg. The U.S. Seventh Army reaches Munich. The French First Army captures Friedrichshafen on Lake Constance.

The 2nd Belorussian front advances fast in the Stralsund direction and seizes Anklam. In Berlin furious fighting takes place around the Reichstag, Chancellery and along

Potsdamer Strasse. In Kottbus South of Berlin, German troops are still holding the Russians back.

The Germans armies in Italy sign surrender terms at The Royal Palace, Caserta, but German officers do not guarantee acceptance, the ceremony takes only 17 minutes. The British Eighth Army secures Venice and advances towards Trieste. The U.S. Fifth Army enters Milan and makes contact with the Eighth Army at Padua.

The bodies of Mussolini and Clara Petacci are brought to Milan and hung upside down from lamp-posts in the square where 15 Partisans were executed a year ago. The bodies are shot and spat upon.

U.S. 7th Army liberates Dachau Concentration Camp.

Roll of Honour – April 29

Representing their comrades who died on this day

1915

+BEST, Thomas

Scots Guards, 2nd Btn. Private. 8879. Died 29/04/1915. Age 20. Born at Newtownards. Son of John and Agnes Gaw Best. Aubers Ridge British Cemetery, Aubers, France. Newtownards WM

+HEGGARTY, Daniel

Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, 1st Btn. Private. 9125. Died 29/04/1915. Helles Memorial, Turkey, Diamond War Memorial, Londonderry

1916

+BLACKWOOD, John

Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers. 8th Bn. Lance Corporal. 20555. Died 29/04/1916. Son of Mr. and Mrs. George Blackwood, of 72, Pound St., Belfast. Brother of Private James Blackwood, Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers. 2nd Bn., who died 16/05/1915. Loos Memorial, Pas de Calais, France

+BRENNAN, Charles

Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, 8th Btn. Private. 12787. Died 29/04/1916. Age 27. Son of Mrs. Elizabeth Brennan, of 5, Carrington St., Belfast; husband of Annie Lewis (formerly Brennan), of 42, Glentoran St., Belfast. Bethune Town Cemetery, France

+CASTLES, Edward Abram

Royal Irish Fusiliers, 7th. Btn. Serjeant. 6125. Long Service and Good Conduct Medal. Died 29/04/1916. Age 36. Born Gilford. Served in the South African Campaign. Son of William John and Sarah Castles, of Derryadd, Lurgan; husband to Rachel Frances Castles, of 5, Barrack St., Armagh. Vermelles British Cemetery France. Armagh WM

+COID, James

Royal Irish Rifles, 7th Btn. Lance Corporal. 5314. Died 29/04/1916. Age 21. Son of Mrs. Jane McCloy, of 17, Shipboy St., Belfast. Loos Memorial, France

+CROCKETT, Charles L

Funeral of Derry Officer

"The remains of **Second-Lieut. Charles L. Crockett,** 12th Battalion Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, who died on the 29th ult. at King George V. Hospital, Dublin, from wounds received in the "Dublin rebellion", arrived by motor on Wednesday afternoon at the residence of his father, Mr. A. Crockett, Mountfield, Templemore Park, Londonderry, and were interred in the City Cemetery.

"Rev. J. Carson Greer, preaching at morning service in Strand Presbyterian Church on Sabbath, made sympathetic reference to the death of Lieutenant Charles Crockett, who, he said, had been shot by the rebels in Dublin, where he had gone, to play a soldier's part on behalf of King and country. Having spoken of his great admiration for the fine qualities of the young officer, the preacher said — On his twentieth birthday his life-work was done, and he heard the Master's "Well done." He was one of the first to respond to the Empire's appeal to all her loyal sons, and in the true spirit of Christian chivalry he never for a moment wavered. Mr. Greer also expressed the sympathy of himself and the congregation for the sorrowing parents, brothers, and sisters". Charles was the only man from the Maiden City to die in the Easter Rebellion of 1916.

Son of Andrew and Rebecca Crockett. Family memorial, Londonderry City Cemetery. Diamond WM

+CURRAN. Patrick Gerrard

Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers. 8th Btn. Serjeant. 16526. Died 29/04/1916. Age 22. Born in Armagh to John and Catherine. His father John was a constable in the RIC born in Co. Carlow. His mother was born in Londonderry. The family lived in Crossmaglen. Son of Catherine Curran, of 68, Foyle St., Londonderry, and the late John Curran. Chocques Military Cemetery, France

+DARBY, Peter

Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers. 8th Btn. Private. 26162. Died 29/04/1916. Age 25. Son of Peter and Rose Darby, of Kilero, Co. Down; husband of Rosaleen Darby, of 216, Falls Rd., Belfast. Loos Memorial, France

+DOHERTY, James

Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers. 8th Btn. Lance Serjeant. 25541. Died 29/04/1916. Age 26. A member of the Royal Irish Constabulary. Son of John and Catherine Doherty, of Letterbin, Newtownstewart, Co. Tyrone. Loos Memorial, France

+DRUMM, Peter

Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers. 8th Btn. Corporal. 20605. Died 29/04/1916. Age 21. Son of Peter and Rose Drumm, of Cross St., Enniskillen. Loos Memorial, France

+DUGAN, Richard

Royal Irish Fusiliers, 7th Btn. Private. 20834. Died 29/04/1916. Belfast. Enlisted in London. Loos Memorial, France.

+FALLS, Stephen

Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, 8th Btn. Private. 24857. Died 29/04/1916. Age 29. Son of Michael and Jane Falls, of Barness, Upper Plumbridge. Loos Memorial, France

+HAYES, Thomas

Royal Dublin Fusiliers, 8th Btn. Serjeant. 14496. Died 29/04/1916. Age 29. Son of the late Patrick Hayes, of 21, Halcombe St., Belfast. Loos Memorial, France

+HUGHES, George

Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers. 8th Btn. Private. 18755. Died 29/04/1916. Age 39. Enlisted Hamilton, Scotland. Born about 1876 in Crossmaglen, Co. Armagh. He worked as a bricklayer. Husband to Mary Hughes, of 113, Crown St., Glasgow. Loos Memorial, France

+JONES, Edward

Royal Irish Fusiliers, 8th Btn. Private. 21158. Died 29/04/1916. Age 27. Son of John and Mary Quinn. Born in Dublin or Dungannon. Bethune Town Cemetery, France

+KEARNEY, Robert John

Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers. 8th Btn. Private. 26217. Died 29/04/1916. Age 20. Son of David and Jane Kearney, of The Main, Drumsura, Limavady. Loos Memorial, France

+KEITH, James

Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, 8th Btn. Lance Corporal. 25129. Died 29/04/1916. Age 24. Born in Co. Armagh. By 1901 he was living with his parents and family in Glasgow. Son of Robert and Liza Jane Keith; husband to Georgina S. Keith, of 378, South Wellington St., Glasgow. Vermelles British Cemetery, France. Armagh WM

+KINGSMORE, Patrick

Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, 8th Btn. Private. 20652. Died 29/04/1916. From Dunmurry, enlisted in Belfast and served in the CR (3686) before transferring to 8 RInF Bethune Town Cemetery, Pas de Calais

+LARKHAM, Harry

Royal Irish Rifles, 7th Btn. Rifleman. 5316. Died 29/04/1916. Age 22. Son of William and Sarah Jane Larkham, of 6, Ambrose St., Belfast. Loos Memorial, France

+McALINDON, Hugh

Royal Dublin Fusiliers, 8th Btn. Private. 24559. Died 29/04/1916. Age 27. Born 01/10/1888 in Coalisland. The family moved to Port Glasgow. Son of Alexander and Catherine McAlindon, of Port Glasgow; husband to Ruth McAlindon, of 82, Bay St., Port Glasgow. Vermelles British Cemetery, France

+McKAY, P H

Royal Irish Fusiliers, 7th Btn. attd. 1st Btn. Corporal. 13168. Died 29/04/1916. Age 45. Husband to E. McKay, of 1, Currell's Place, Belfast. Bethune Town Cemetery, France

+McKERNON, J

Connaught Rangers, 6th Btn. Private. 2437. Died 29/04/1916. Age 20. Son of Annie McKernon, of Collinward Terrace, Whitewell, Belfast, and the late John McKernon. Bethune Town Cemetery, France

+McNEFF, E F

Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, 8th Btn. Serjeant. 20697. Died 29/04/1916. Age 21. Son of James and Mary A. McNeff, of Short Strand, Belfast. Vermelles British Cemetery, France

+MEEHAN, Thomas James

Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers. 8th Btn. Lance Corporal. 25131. Died 29/04/1916. Age 20. Son of Francis Meehan, of Randleshough, Monea, Co. Fermanagh, and the late Catherine Meehan. Loos Memorial, France

+MORTON, Nathaniel

Royal Irish Rifles,18th Btn. Lance Corporal. 18/250. Died 29/04/1916. Age 19. Son of James Morton, of 22, Woodvale St., Belfast. Grangegorman Millitary Cemetery, Dublin

+PRUNTY, James

Royal Irish Fusiliers, 7th Btn. Private. 17024. Died 29/04/1916. Age 21. (Served as Prender). Son of James Prunty, of 30, McDonnell St., Belfast. Loos Memorial

+SHORTT, Alexander

Connaught Rangers, 6th Btn. Private. 4069. Died 29/04/1916. Age 19. Son of Alexander and Ellen Shortt, of

71, Elizabeth St., Grosvenor Rd., Belfast. Native of Banbridge. Vermelles British Cemetery, France

+SMYTH, James

Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers. 8th Btn. A Coy. Corporal. 20742. Died 29/04/1916. Age 30. Son of the late Michael and Maria Smyth, of Drumawill, Enniskillen. Loos Memorial, France

+TRIMBLE, Noel Desmond

Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers.12th Btn. attd. 8th Btn. Second Lieutenant. Died 29/04/1916. Age 20. Portora Royal School. Scholar TCD. Son of W. C. and Lily Trimble, of Century House, Enniskillen. Brother of Lieutenant Reginald Trimble and Captain Ailwyn Trimble. Both Old Portorans survived the war. Their father William Copeland Trimble was the owner of the Impartial Reporter newspaper in Enniskillen. Philosophe British Cemetery, Mazingarbe, France.

+TURNBULL, Thomas John

Royal Navy. Stoker 1st Class. K/25312. HMS Russell. Died 29/04/1916. Age 23. Lived in English St., Armagh. Son of James and Margaret Turnbull, of Mount View, Sunday's Well, Cork. Malta (Capuccini) Naval Cemetery, Malta

+WEIR, John

Royal Dublin Fusiliers, 8th Btn. Private. 9596. Died 29/04/1916. Age 19. Born 17/03/1896 in Mullyrodden. Son of John and Margaret Weir, of Mullyrodden, Drumglatt, Dungannon. Loos Memorial, France. Dungannon WM

1917

+POWELL, George Henry

Machine Gun Corps, 5th Company. Second Lieutenant. 2431. Died 29/04/1917. Age 33. The 1901 census shows George Henry to be living at the Dublin Working Boys' Home and Harding Technical School at Lord Edward Street, Dublin. He was 17 years old. He was working as a stationer. Born on 20t/01/1884 in Nenagh, County Tipperary. He was the son of Mr. George Henry Powell M.D. and Susan McCutcheon Powell. Dr. Powell was the Medical Doctor in the district for 14 years before he died in 1896. Susan Powell moved to live in Cookstown after the death of her husband and was a district nurse. Arras Memorial, Arras, France. Cookstown War Dead Book

1918

+GORDON, Charles Alexander

Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers. 2nd Btn. Private. 31209. Died 29/04/1918. Son of Charles and Isabella Gordon, of Eden, Plumbridge, Co. Tyrone. Tyne Cot Memorial, Belgium

+HUNTER, William

Royal Irish Rifles, 16th Btn. Serjeant. 16/347. Died 29/04/1918 of wounds in hospital in GB. Born Templepatrick 23/04/1892. Pre-war he was employed at Gunnings & Campbell Ltd., Flax and Tow Spinners, North Howard St., Belfast. Son of John, a blacksmith, and of Agnes (nee Hoy) Hunter of Parkgate. Following Agnes' death in November 1911, his aunt, Martha Hoy, became his guardian. Martha lived in Summer St, in the Oldpark area of Belfast.

Holywood Cemetery County Down. Agnes Street Presbyterian Church RH

+LAW, Ernest

Royal Irish Rifles, 15th Btn. Rifleman. 15/9228.Died 29/04/1918. Age 19. Son of James and Frances Emily Law, of Belfast. Boulogne Eastern Cemetery, France

+LEONARD, Francis Patrick Mapletoft

Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, 8th Btn. Lieutenant. Died 29/04/1918. Age 26. Enlisted in the U.P.S. Btn. Royal Fusiliers, Sept., 1914. Gazetted Sept.1914. Son of the late Francis Mapletoft Leonard and Jessie Leonard, of Belfast. Loos Memorial, France

+LEWIS, Frederic Homer

Royal Irish Rifles. 10th Battalion attached 1st Battalion. Died 29/04/1918. Age 24. Member of the Training Corps 1916 - 17. Son of Frederick William and Lizzie Blanche Lewis, Shore Rd., Belfast. Tyne Cot Memorial Panel 138

+McDONALD, Albert

Royal Irish Rifles, 1st Btn. Rifleman. 257 and 18/257. Died 29/04/1918. He was born at Greenvale Street, Ballymena on the 21/07/1899 and he was the youngest son of butcher and cattle dealer David McDonald and Sarah O'Neill, Greenvale Street, off Broughshane Street, Ballymena. They were there in 1901 and 1911. The couple, both of Ballymena, had married in High Kirk (2nd Ballymena) Presbyterian Church on 07/01/1876. They said in 1911 that they had had sixteen children and that eleven were still alive in 1911. Albert had enlisted aged 16 in 1915 and had been

at the front for only three months when he was killed after having volunteered to assist a wiring party. New Irish Farm Cemetery, Ypres. 2nd Ballymena Presbyterian Church RH.

+McKEE, John

Royal Irish Rifles. 1st Btn. Lance Corporal. 4637. Died 29/04/1918. Age 18. One month after he got married, Lance Corporal John McKee died of wounds sustained during the German Spring Offensive. When John died, his wife Cissie was living at 87 Movilla Street, Newtownards (the Maxwell family home). Captain W.H. Hutchison, Chaplain to the Forces, wrote to Cissie McKee to express his sympathy and to tell her that her husband was 'a brave soldier, a loyal comrade and friend and a true man'. Rev Hutchison explained that most of the Battalion records, including the next-of-kin lists, had been lost during the retreat from St Quentin and that he had only been able to trace her because of a letter from her that was found in Jack's pocket. John McKee was born in Barrow-in-Furness, England. He was a soldier stationed at Clandeboye Camp when he and Cecilia (Cissie) Maxwell were married on 28/03/1918 in Newtownards Roman Catholic Church. Son of Bernard McKee, of Armagh; husband to Cecelia McKee, of 51, Greenwell St., Newtownards. New Irish Farm Cemetery. Belgium. Newtownards and District WM

+SIMPSON, Samuel

Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, 2nd Btn. Served with 36th Div. Sig. Sect. Private. 20378. Died 29/04/1918. Age 21. Son of Robert and Catherine Simpson, of 45, King St., Waterside, Londonderry. Esquelbecq Military Cemetery, France

+THOMAS, Philip Henry

Royal Irish Rifles, 1st Btn. Rifleman.10878. Died 29/04/1918. Age 16. By 1901 his family was livibng in in Carrickfergus and later Greenisland. Enlisted Belfast. Son of William and Mary (nee Johnston) Thomas, Laurel Mount, Greenisland, Co.Antrim. William was the choirmaster in Whiteabbey Presbyterian Church and Mary was the organist. Tyne Cot Memorial, Belgium. Whiteabbey Presbyterian Church RH

1920

+BOYD, James

Welch Regiment. Private. 291511. Died 29 /04/1920. Age 24. Son of James and Annie Boyd; husband of Margaret Boyd, of 8, Summerhill St., Belfast. Carnmoney Cemetery

+MATTHEWS, J

12th Bn. Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers. Private.15725. Died 29/04/1920. Aged 25. Son of James & Martha Matthews. St. John's Parish Churchyard, Killowen, Coleraine

1941

+RICE, Owen

Royal Ulster Rifles, 1st Btn. Rifleman. 7015549. Died 29/04/1941. Aged 32. Son of Owen and Catherine Rice of Banbridge. Husband to Louisa Rice of Banbridge. Banbridge Roman Catholic Cemetery

+WATTON, Alexander Booker

Royal Irish Fusiliers, 2nd Btn. Lance Corporal. 6977994. Died 29/04/1941. Aged 26. Son of William and Margaret Watton, of Ballycastle. Pembroke Military Cemetery, Malta.

1943

+MACINTYRE, Gordon Leslie

RAF. Flight Lieutenant (Pilot). 42718. DFC. Died 29/04/1943. Aged 27. 24 Sqdn. Son of Peter and Annie MacIntyre; husband to Patricia Margaret Aimee MacIntyre, Coleraine. Mill Hill Cemetery, Middlesex

+MORROW, Patrick William John

RAF. Sergeant. Died 29/04/1943. Aged 24. 196 Sqdn. On the night of 28/04/1943 he was aboard Vickers Wellington X aircraft HE220 which took off from R.A.F. Leaconfield in Yorkshire at 2045 hrs to perform mine laying duties in the Forgetmenots Region, being Kiel Canal. The aircraft and crew was lost without trace. Son of Francis and Margaretta Morrow, Dunmurry. Runnymede Memorial, Panel 159

1945

+FEE, James

Irish Guards, 3rd Btn. Guardsman. 2724794. Died 29/04/1945. Aged 19. Son of William and Matilda Fee, of Ballyclare, Co. Antrim, Northern Ireland. Becklingen War Cemetery, Niedersachsen, Germany

+HOWE, William Henry Herbert

RAFVR. Aircraftman 1st Class.1902171. Died 29/04/1945. Aged 50. Son of Henry and Elizabeth Howe; Husband of

Anna May Howe of Culkey. Mullaghdun Church of Ireland Churchyard. Portora RS WM

VETERANS

LIGGETT, Alexander

Royal Armoured Corps, Sergeant Alexander Liggett (7877628) MiD, served during WW2. Born on 29/04/1909, he was the son of Joshua Liggett and Mary Liggett (née McCullough) of Corcrain, Portadown, Co. Armagh. His father Joshua Liggett, DCM, served in The Great War, winning a Distinguished Conduct Medal in 1916.

In 1930, Liggett enlisted in the British Army. He served as a reservist for 5 years. After training in Dorset, England, he served for several years in India and Palestine. A keen sportsman, he boxed and played football in the military. During his time in India, he played field hockey for the national team.

In India, Alexander Liggett married for the first time. On 10th August 1931, the 22 year old soldier married Patricia Smith in Lahore, West Bengal, India. Patricia gave birth to a daughter, Dawn Liggett on 20th February 1932. It is not known what happened to end the marriage but both Patricia and Alexander would both remarry. Patricia's 2nd husband would go on to adopt Dawn.

On returning from India, Alexander settled in Portadown, Co. Armagh again, marrying a local girl and having a son named

Gordon Liggett. His wife died shortly after the birth of their 1st son.

On 24th April 1937, Alexander Liggett married Kathleen Burns at St. Mark's Parish Church, Portadown, Co. Armagh. The couple set up home at 10 Bright Street, Portadown, Co. Armagh. At the time, Liggett worked as a weaver with Hamilton Robb Ltd. in River Lane, Portadown, Co. Armagh. He rejoined the army in 1938.

With the outbreak of the Second World War, Liggett joined the new Royal Armoured Corps. He served from the beginning of the conflict, seeing action at Dunkirk in 1940.

On 17th June 1941, Alexander Liggett 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 went missing. Seven weeks before, his wife Kathleen received an aerogramme saying Sergeant Liggett was "fit and well".

The Portadown Times, on Friday 1st August 1941reprted - Portadown Man Missing

"News has been received by Mrs. Kathleen Liggett, 10 Bright St., Portadown, that her husband, Sgt. Alex. Liggett, Royal Armoured Corps, is a prisoner of war. Sgt. Liggett served for seven years in India and Palestine. His father, Mr Joshua Liggett, won the D.C.M. in the last war."

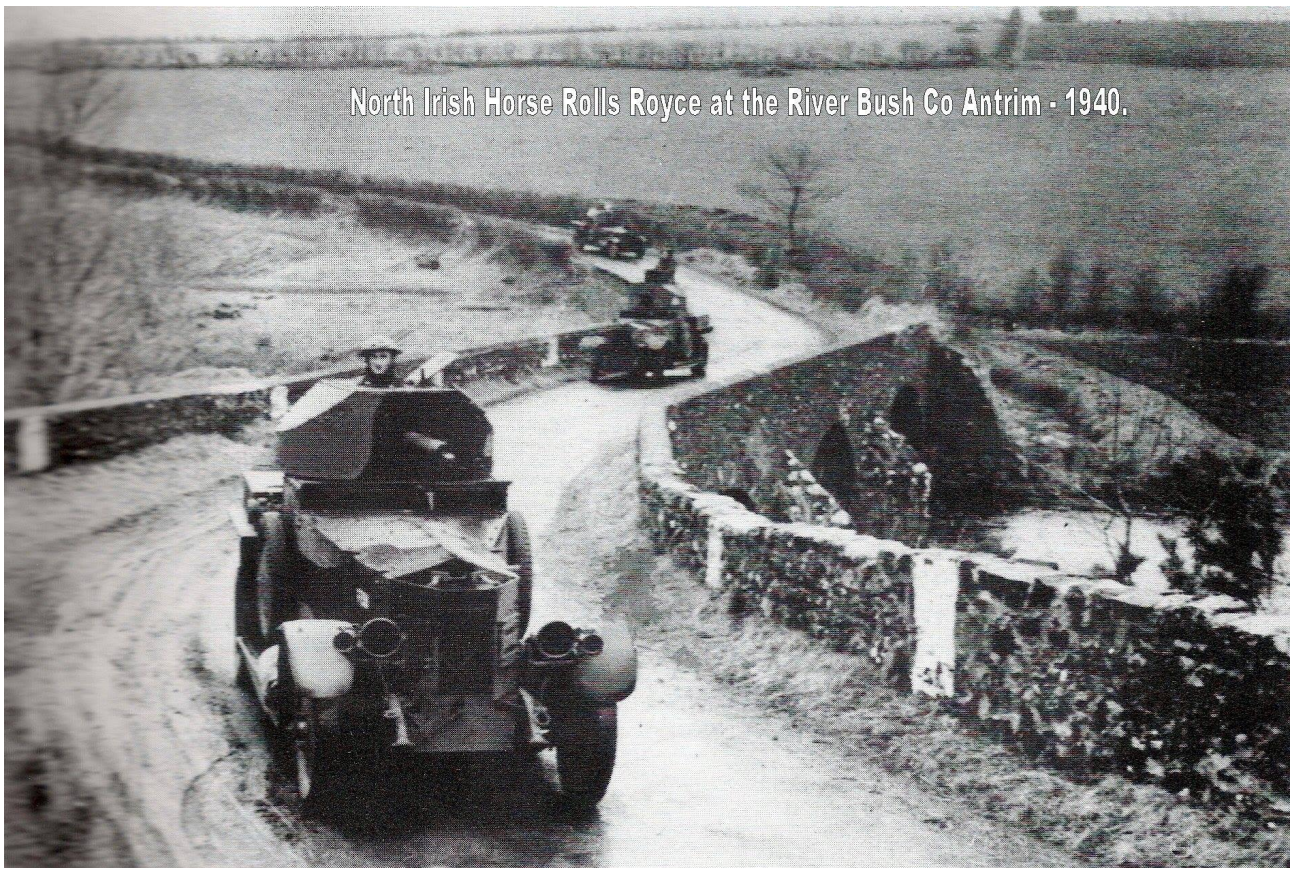
In 1943, Sergeant Alexander Liggett was in Prisoner Of War Camp No. 53, Urbisaglia Macerata, postmark number 3300. The camp became known as Sforza Costa. Sforza Costa lay by a railway twelve miles south of Macerata in the Marche region on Italy's east coast. The camp stood on the western edge of the 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.

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.

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.

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 the war would end for Sergeant Alexander Liggett.

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. It held over 10,000 men.



The British Army demobbed Sergeant Liggett 2 months after World War Two ended. He returned to civilian life, undernourished and on a special diet like many other former prisoners of war. On his return home, he worked at Wilson's Canning Factory on Castle Avenue, Portadown, Co. Armagh. He would later work in the Post Office sorting office for 27 years until his retirement. After this, he worked for a short time in security at Craigavon House until his 70s.

Alexander Liggett and Kathleen Liggett had 4 children of their own. June Liggett was born on 07/06/1946, Thomas Alexander Liggett (known as Philip) was born on 25/11/1949, Desmond Joshua Liggett was born on 05/03/1951, and Kathleen Susan Liggett was born on 03/01/1954. Thomas Alexander Liggett died in a tragic accident at the family home on 07/06/1957.

SHIELDS, W Eric

Served with RN in WW2. Captain, G Company, UDR. Shot by IRA 29/04/1977 outside his home in Dungannon. He was off duty at the time of his death. Marrried with six children.

Every day is a Remembrance Day

We will remember them

To return to Home Page - click on Remembrance NI masthead.

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

Copyright - all material in this **remembrance ni** publication is copyright, and must not be reproduced in print or electronically.