

Ladies and Gentlemen on behalf of the East Belfast Historical and Cultural Society I welcome you to our memorial parade and service.

Since we last got together to remember Jimmy McCurrie, Bobby Neill, Tommy Reid, Sandy Gould, Danny Loughins and Bobby Kincaid a lot of water has as they say “gone under the bridge.” Yet again our memorial garden has been attacked by sectarian thugs from Short Strand but yet again the good loyalist people of east Belfast rallied round and restored the garden to it’s beautiful best. As they say the truth hurts and if the fact that this memorial garden, which stands to remember those murdered by Provo gunmen, annoys certain residents in Short Strand we sat unlucky. On behalf of the East Belfast Historical and Cultural Society I can confirm that every time they attack our garden we will make it even better than before.

The other significant event, which has occurred since last year is that we now have devolved government in Northern Ireland. As a society we welcome this positive step. Yes we do have Provos in power and yes it is hard to swallow but that is democracy. What we as a society will say is that it is hypocritical of Sinn Fein ministers to complain about the lack of human rights for victims of alleged collusion when all they want to do is airbrush their sickening abuses of human rights from the pages of history. They portray themselves as people who are lily white and never carried out any murders, maiming or torture. You and I know different. Sinn Fein and in particular our Deputy First Minister have been responsible for murder and mayhem across our beloved country and we will never ever forget the atrocities these people committed. The Provisional IRA and their cohorts murdered all of those who we remember tonight. Sinn Fein and the Provisional IRA are as one. The blood of the innocent is on the hands of the Sinn Fein leadership. **Ladies and Gentlemen we will never forget.** To the families and friends of those gathered here tonight we promise you as a community we will always remember what these people have done in the past and we would urge our elected representatives at all levels to remind the wider world just what history these people have at every opportunity.

Another event we as a community must never forget is the sacrifice of our forefathers as we approach the 90th anniversary of the battles in and around Flanders, Belgium. On the 7th June 1917 the 36th Ulster and 16th Irish Divisions took part in one of the most successful battles of

the Great War. The Battle of Messines. They fought together to fight the enemy and suffered heavy losses. In total the Allied forces lost 40,000 men. Thousands of men from the island of Ireland left these shores and sadly never returned. Their graves are scattered across the poppy fields in France and Belgium. Many more have no known grave and their names are inscribed in stone at Thiepval, the Menin Gate and Tyne Cot cemetery. Never ever to be forgotten.

Just like Jimmy McCurrie, Bobby Neill, Tommy Reid, Sandy Gould, Danny Loughins and Bobby Kincaid they to will never be forgotten.

In closing Ladies and Gentlemen the Society calls for unity amongst our people, unity amongst our political parties, unity amongst the loyal orders and the bands. It is essential that we all work together for our common good. There are many out there who are willing to divide us or willing to encourage us to squabble amongst ourselves. We must not. - a unionist is a unionist is a unionist. It matters not what goes before or after the word unionist, we must work together to keep the union safe and secure.

Once again Ladies and Gentlemen many thanks for coming tonight to remember.

Ladies and Gentlemen – No Surrender.
