



## remembrance ni

### On This Day 1982

**Rear Admiral  
Sandy  
Woodward,**  
who was in  
Gibraltar in  
HMS Antrim,  
was given his  
orders under  
Operation  
Corporate. At  
2130 he was told  
that Argentina had  
invaded the



Falklands The next day he sailed South In HMS Glamorgan with 10 ships to  
meet up as a task force.

### South African who started The RAF

August 2017 marked the centenary of the report to form the  
Royal Air Force (RAF). The idea of an independent Air Force

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from Navy or Army control is now officially 100+ years old, and one key South African statesman, General Jan Smuts, gave birth to it.

Today, if you walk into the Royal Air Force Private Club in Mayfair, London you are greeted by a bust of Jan Smuts in the foyer, it stands there as an acknowledgement to the man who founded what is now one of the most prestigious and powerful air forces in the world – The RAF.

So how did it come to be that a South African started The Royal Air Force and why the need to have a separate and independent arm of service?

Simply put, during World War 1, the British Army and the Navy developed their own air-forces in support of their own respective ground and naval operations. The Royal Flying Corps had been born out of the Air Battalion of the Royal Engineers and was under the control of the British Army. The Royal Naval Air Service was its naval equivalent and was controlled by the Admiralty.

However, the use of air power in World War 1 was developing beyond the immediate tactical use of aircraft by the Navy and the Army. In Great Britain the civilian population had been on the receiving end of extensive German bombing raids from Zeppelin airships. The public outrage and the psychological effects of this bombing was having a significant impact on British politicians.

In reaction to this, the politicians proposed the creation of a long-range bombing force both as a retaliation and also as a means of disrupting enemy war production. There were also



## General Jan Smuts

continuing concerns about aircraft supply and priorities between the services.

The British Prime Minister, Lloyd George asked General Jan Smuts to join his War Cabinet (the supreme authority governing Great Britain and her Empire's forces in World War 1). Lloyd George then commissioned General Jan Smuts to report on two issues:

Firstly to look into arrangements for Home Defence against bombing and secondly, air organisation generally and the direction of aerial operations.

Smuts is generally accredited with improving British air defence and answering the first priority.

However it was 'Smuts report' of August 1917 in response to the second of these questions that led to the recommendation to establish a separate Air Service. In making his recommendations Smuts commented that

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*“the day may not be far off when aerial operations with their devastation of enemy lands and destruction of industrial and populous centres on a vast scale may become the principal operations of war, to which the older forms of military and naval operations may become secondary and subordinate”.*

Given this new dimension he commented that it was important that the design of aircraft and engines for such operations should be settled in accordance with the policy which would direct their future strategic employment. On these grounds he argued there was an urgent need to create an Air Ministry and that this Ministry should sort out the amalgamation of the two air services.



**The War Cabinet during WW1, General Smuts seated front, far right**

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The War Cabinet accepted this recommendation to amalgamate the two separate air forces under one single and independent Air Force. Smuts was then asked to lead an Air Organisation Committee to put it into effect.

The Air Force Bill received Royal assent from the King on the 29 November 1917, which gave the newly formatted Air Force the prefix of 'Royal' (up to that point the idea was to call it the 'Imperial Air Force').

The RAF was officially formed on the 1 April 1918 with the amalgamation of the Royal Naval Air Service and the Royal Flying Corps. Following which Lord Rothermere was appointed on 3 January 1918 as the first Secretary of State for Air and an Air Council established.

To emphasise the merger of both army and naval aviation in the new service, to appease the 'senior service' i.e. the Navy, many of the titles of officers were deliberately chosen to be of a naval character, such as Flight Lieutenant, Wing Commodore, Group Captain and Air Commodore.

The newly created Royal Air Force was the most powerful air force in the world on its creation, with over 20,000 aircraft and over 300,000 personnel (including the Women's Royal Air Force). It now qualifies as the oldest independent Air Force in the World.

## **In the newspapers**

### **2nd April 1915 Belfast Newsletter**

Ulster Division

Death of two Volunteers

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The death took place yesterday, in the Ulster Division Hospital, Donegall Road, of Rifleman Christopher McPherson, 8th Battalion Royal Irish Rifles (East Belfast Volunteers).

Rifleman Robert Bustard, 15th Battalion Royal Irish Rifles (North Belfast Volunteers), died on Wednesday in Purdysburn Hospital. He lived at 16, Baden Powell Street, and was a member of Foster Memorial Loyal Orange Lodge No.449

## **Roll of Honour - April 2**

**Representing their comrades who fell this day**

**1915**

**+ LIDDLE, Thomas Dixon**

RN. Staff Surgeon. HMS Thames. Died: 02/04/1915. Age 35. QUB MB, BCh, BAO, 1903. Thomas passed his surgical exams on 23/11/1903 and immediately joined the Admiralty. Eight years later, on 23/11/1911, he became a Staff Surgeon.

Over the years he served in many different ships and had at least two spells in Haslar Hospital. His last ship was HMS Thames which he joined on 07/01/1913.

When he died on 02/04/1915 there were extenuating circumstances which called for a post mortem to be held. The results of the post mortem were read by Staff Surgeon Hughes. The cause of death was given as morphia poisoning, self administered, but whether by intent or misadventure, there was insufficient evidence to prove.



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Born 1897. Son of Edward (MD) and Elizabeth Liddlle, Cookstown. Sheerness (Isle of Sheppey) Cemetery. QUB WM. IMR

## **1918**

### **+DOUGLAS, Fred**

RMLI. Private. CH/19888. Chatham Division. Died 02/04/1918. Age 20. Enlisted 03/05/1915. Served in Newcastle, Queen and Alexander. Invalided 27/02/1918. Born Belfast 18/01/1898. Son of John and Jane Douglas, Danube St., Belfast. Belfast City Cemetery. ADM 159/133/19888

## **1919**

### **+QUIREY, A**

RN. Engineman. 5257/ES. HM Trawler The Prince. Died 02/04/1919. Age 34. Married with two young sons. Riga St., Belfast. Muckamore graveyard.

## **1920**

### **+DOWNIE, Thomas**

RN. Stoker 1st Class. SS114250. HMS Retriever. Died 02/04/1920. Age 24. Born Belfast 28/02/1895. Husband of Ellen M. Downie, Fair Hill, Ballycarry. Belfast City Cemetery. ADM 188/1120/114250

## **1944**

### **+McCRYSTAL, Bernard**

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Pioneer Corps. 79 Coy. Private. 13011025. Died 02/04/1944. Age 46. Husband to Elizabeth McCrystal, Ballymena. Beach Hear War Cemetery, Anzio, Italy

## **Enrolled this day**

### **LEWIS, Thomas**

RN. AB. 215679. Boy service from 16/02/1905. Enrolled 02/04/1903 for 12 years. Served to 16/01/1909. Joined RFR 17/01/1909. War service from 02/08/1914 in Vivid, Donegall and President III. Demobbed 10/02/1919. Born Belfast 02/04/1885. ADM 188/378/215679

### **COCHRANE, George Waterson**

RN. Leading Signalman. 215674. HMS Boadicea. Jutland. Enrolled 02/04/1904 for 12 years. War service in Vivid, Leander and Boadicea (09/08/1916 - 19/03/1919). Served to 19/03/1919. Born Coleraine 02/04/1886. ADM 188/378/215674

### **PURDY, Robert**

RN. AB. J5056. HMS Orion. Jutland. Boy service from 07/09/1909. Enrolled 02/04/1911 for 12 years. Re-engaged 28/02/1923. Served to 31/12/1928. War service in Queen, Vivid and Conqueror. Born Annalong, 02/04/1893. ADM 188/657/5056

### **McCULLOCH, John Joseph**

RN. Stoker I. K18930. Enrolled 02/04/1913 for 12 years. War service in Hibernia (09/08/1913 - 19/02/1917), Pembroke II, Agamemnon and Europa. Invalided 22/12/1921. Born Carrickfergus 23/07/1894. ADM 188/904/18930



## Demobbed this day

### **McCLELLAND, Robert James**

RN. Stoker I. SS107581. Enrolled 04/08/1890 for 5 and 7 years. Served to 02/08/1913. Joined RFR 03/08/1913. Served from 02/08/1914. War service in Pembroke II, Dido, Woolwich, Attentive II, Vigilant and Sarepta. Demobbed 02/04/1919. Born Belfast 04/08/1890. Upper Townsend St, Belfast. Agnes Street - PCI RH ADM 188/1113/107581

### **McGURK, Robert John**

RN. Stoker I. SS112840. Enrolled 10/09/1912 for 5 and 7 years. War service in Tyne, Wallington, Pembroke II and Hecla (Pigeon). Invalided 02/04/1919. Born Belfast 03/03/1894. ADM 188/1118/112840

## Enrolled this day in Fleet Reserve

### **FLEMING, Thomas Patrick**

RN. Stoker. SS114898. HMS Shannon Jutland. Served from 24/09/1913. Joined RFR 02/04/1919. War service in Shannon (13/05/1914 - 13/04/1918) and Pembroke. Born Belfast 08/07/1892. ADM 188/1120/114898

## On this day - April 2

### **1801**

Napoleonic Wars: The British led by Horatio Nelson destroy the Danish fleet in the naval Battle of Copenhagen

## 1917

US President Woodrow Wilson presented a declaration of war against Germany to the US Congress.

## 1935

Sir Watson-Watt was granted a patent for RADAR.

## 1942

The British Indian Ocean Fleet withdraw to Addu Atoll to avoid a clash with a far superior Japanese fleet. The overwhelming Japanese carrier force would have sunk the slow British capital ships. HMA Ships Napier, Norman and Nizam were part of the fleet's escort

## 1944

The Soviet Union announced that its troops had crossed the Prut River and entered Romania.

**38 Irish Brigade** - CQMS O'Sullivan, 2 LIR: "I was taken with my supplies to San Michele & I was allocated 30 mules which I loaded with tools, food & water & the men's kit. After getting so close to Monte Cassino that we felt we were almost under the monastery's walls, .we started climbing a precipitous path to Monte Castellone. We had to take particular care as the nervous muleteers were attempting to ditch their loads. I finally arrived at the top with about half a dozen mules. Loads were spread along the track behind us...."

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1945



American troops of the 10th Army march inland after landing on the beach of Okinawa, Japan, April 1945.



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## 1982

Argentine forces landed on the Falkland Islands and occupied the area, which marked the beginning of the Falklands War.



Royal Navy Falklands bound

## Acknowledgments

Admiralty records  
Belfast News Letter  
CWGC  
IWM



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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 [houston.mckelvey@btinternet.com](mailto:houston.mckelvey@btinternet.com)

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[houston.mckelvey@btinternet.com](mailto:houston.mckelvey@btinternet.com)

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