



remembrance ni



**Monty addresses his Irish soldiers before D-Day. 2 Btn Royal Ulster Rifles will be headed for Sword.**

## **D-Day - Rifleman Billy Moore**

**William James Moore, known to family and friends as Billy served with the Royal Ulster Rifles, 2nd Battalion .**

In June 1942, aged 18, Billy joined the Young Soldiers' 70th Battalion of The Royal Ulster Rifles. They trained in Essex before disbanding and splitting between the London Irish Regiment and Royal Ulster Rifles training.

Billy Moore was among the group sent to Hoik, Scotland. There, they made their way to Inverairry on the coast where they carried out beach landing exercises. He was twenty years old.

Next stop for the young infantryman was Dartmount, England, and on to Droxford near Southampton. There, they camped in tents for around three weeks awaiting the invasion of France. Security was tight and they were not allowed to leave the camp.

Visitors to Droxford included Princess Elizabeth and General Montgomery. With plans in place, it was then on to Portsmouth to make final preparations for Normandy.

Up until Portsmouth, the men got leave every nine weeks. Sometimes for a week or two weeks, the boys would return to Northern Ireland. In the 2nd Battalion, A Company, 9th Platoon, a trio of Ulstermen –Burrows, Bart, and Crangle – were known as “The BBC”.

## **Royal Ulster Rifles on D-Day**

After three weeks waiting in Portsmouth, The Rifles made two unsuccessful attempts to land on the French coast. The



General Montgomery reads the 'Packing List' for a 2 RUR Rifleman preparing for the D-Day landing, Operation OVERLORD.  
Rfn McCracken stands before him, wearing and carrying the contents of that list.  
*(original image copyright RUR Museum)*

seas were too rough on the first passes. Finally, on 6th June 1944, William James Moore and the Royal Ulster Rifles set foot on Sword Beach.

Billy recalled - "We landed half a mile from Sword Beach We had no idea what it was going to be like. We were met with tanks and machine gun fire; they hit us with everything.

We didn't think there would be so much against us. I saw lads younger than me lying dead in the field with their kit around them. You would have thought they were sleeping.”

Many of his comrades didn't make it ashore. He remembered the sea being rough. Men weighed down by packs, ammunition and useless fold-up bicycles, drowned long before they neared land. Billy's battalion lost more than 180 men before they reached Cambes Wood, caught in crossfire and stifled by Panzers.

### **From Cambes to Belgium**

Billy survived a bomb attack in Cambes Wood. Crangle, a friend from Belfast mentioned earlier died while caught in a blast as he chatted near the top of a trench. Undeterred by the amount of tragic loss, The Rifles would be one of the first battalions to reach Caen three weeks later.

“I buried my mate at Cambes Wood. We were having a wee smoke and a wee pow-wow on the edge of the trench when we heard a shell coming over and jumped. He wasn't quick enough and got it in the back. A lot of good mates were killed at Cambes Wood.”

The Rifles waited on a hillside outside Caen with a Canadian battalion watching as hundreds of bombers attacked the old town. The following day, they entered the fray, fighting through the streets.

“We travelled for another 250 miles to the River Seine and we had to create a bridge for the people coming after us. We were leading the way.”

The Rifles came under fire from German tanks as they began a trek of almost 300 miles into Belgium. They fed, slept and sheltered in what vehicles were left undamaged.

### **Remembered in Regimental Journal**

While serving in Normandy, Billy’s actions saw him remembered in the regimental journal by Lieutenant Cyril Rand -

“Before heading out on patrol, Moore produced a testament which all men had been given before the landings.

“He read extracts from it to the men.”

Rand noted. “At first, the episode struck me as rather incongruous: these soldiers, some of whom had a reputation for hard drinking and pay day brawling, who had probably only seen the inside of a church on church parades, had obviously been quite moved. I also said thank you to Rifleman Moore and, like the members of my patrol, I meant it.”

### **Injured**

As the fighting increased throughout Belgium, Moore received an injury that saw him sent to the field hospital.

From there, the army flew him to Queen Elizabeth Military Hospital in Edgbaston, Birmingham. He remained there for seven months before returning to Northern Ireland. He would not return to the front line. At home, he received further treatment at Lagan Valley Hospital in Lisburn. For a time, Moore still wore a caliper on the injured leg.

Billy Moore lived in Lisburn after the war and in 2006, performed the official opening of a new lounge for the Royal British Legion. He was often quoted in local media with his memories from D-Day and the Normandy campaign.

### **Remembering Rifleman Billy Moore**

Rifleman Moore passed away on the 65th anniversary of the D-Day Landings. He died peacefully on 06/06/2009. Billy was survived by wife Edna, son Billy, daughter-in-law Lynda, grand-daughter Suzanne and her husband Reuben.

His funeral took place on Tuesday 09/06/2009 after a service in Lisburn Cathedral conducted by The Reverend Canon Sam Wright assisted by the Reverend Canon Alex Cheevers.

A lone regimental piper played as four members of the Royal Ulster Rifles Old Comrades Association (Lisburn Branch) carried the coffin. Rifleman Moore was buried with some military ceremony, his coffin draped in the Queen's colours and the Ulster Rifles standard. Retired Major John Jamieson gave the oration before Rifleman William James Moore was laid to rest in Blaris New Cemetery.

SUPREME HEADQUARTERS  
ALLIED EXPEDITIONARY FORCE



Soldiers, Sailors and Airmen of the Allied Expeditionary Force!

You are about to embark upon the Great Crusade, toward which we have striven these many months. The eyes of the world are upon you. The hopes and prayers of liberty-loving people everywhere march with you. In company with our brave Allies and brothers-in-arms on other Fronts, you will bring about the destruction of the German war machine, the elimination of Nazi tyranny over the oppressed peoples of Europe, and security for ourselves in a free world.

Your task will not be an easy one. Your enemy is well trained, well equipped and battle-hardened. He will fight savagely.

But this is the year 1944 ! Much has happened since the Nazi triumphs of 1940-41. The United Nations have inflicted upon the Germans great defeats, in open battle, man-to-man. Our air offensive has seriously reduced their strength in the air and their capacity to wage war on the ground. Our Home Fronts have given us an overwhelming superiority in weapons and munitions of war, and placed at our disposal great reserves of trained fighting men. The tide has turned ! The free men of the world are marching together to Victory !

I have full confidence in your courage, devotion to duty and skill in battle. We will accept nothing less than full Victory !

Good Luck ! And let us all beseech the blessing of Almighty God upon this great and noble undertaking.

*Dwight D. Eisenhower*

## Roll of Honour - June 06

*Representing their colleagues who died on this day*

**1915**

### **+ARDIS, James**

RMLI. Private. CH/336(S). Died of wounds 06/06/1915. Aged 21. Enrolled 28/09/1914. In Gallipoli 01/01/1915 - 06/06/1915. Born Belfast 17/01/1894. Son of James and Sarah Ardis, Mervue Street, Belfast. Belfast Corporation RH. Helles Memorial, Turkey. ADM 159/143/336

### **+McILROY, William**

Royal Irish Rifles, 2nd Btn. "C" Coy. Lance Corporal. 9223. Died 16/06/1915. Aged 31. Son of the late William McIlroy; husband of Elizabeth McIlroy, of 31, Aberdeen St., Belfast. Ypres (Menin Gate) Memorial, West-Vlaanderen, Belgium

**1918**

### **+MAGILL, James**

Royal Irish Fusiliers, 9<sup>th</sup> Btn. A Coy. (formerly 1805 North Irish Horse). Private. 41435. Died 06/06/1918. Aged 25. He was to see a lot of action and to suffer shellshock but met his fate as a consequence of the German Spring Offensive of 1918. He was part of the retreat from St Quentin and was taken prisoner. He was held in a compound which was bombed by the French, the airship raid killing over twenty British prisoners. Confirmed by an entry in German records. Son of Dyas (or Dias), a greengrocer, and Catherine (sometimes called Cassandra, Magill, of 25, Springwell St,

Ballymena. James had been a pork cutter and then a railway labourer in his prewar life. Ham British Cemetery, Muille-Villete. His death plaque and medals are now prominently displayed at Ballymena Services Club.

**+SCOTT, Alexander Scott**

Royal Irish Rifles, 2nd Btn. Rifleman. 7840. Died 06/06/1918. Aged 26. Son of Alexander and the late Caroline Scott nee Higgin, step son of Margaret Scott nee Miller, of Tobergill Street, Belfast ; Husband to Catherine Scott nee McQuiston, of 20, Dundee Street, Belfast. Wulverghem-Lindenhoek Road Military Cemetery, Belgium. Northern Whig 19/10/1918

**1940**

**+CROOKS, James Charles**

Royal Army Service Corps. Corporal. T/56782. Died 06/06/1940. Aged 22. Son of Daniel and Mary E. Crooks, of Richhill, Co. Armagh. Alexandria (Chatby) Military and War Memorial Cemetery, Egypt

**1941**

**+BROWN, Doreen Meta**

Auxiliary Territorial Service. Private. W/38803. Died 06/06/1941. Aged 18. Daughter of James and Ethel Beatrice Brown, of Downpatrick. Belfast City Cemetery

**+MILLAR, Samuel James**

RAFVR. Sergeant. 745254. Died 06/06/1941. Aged 20.148 Sqn. Son of James and Mary R. Millar, of Carrickfergus,

Co. Antrim. Alamein Memorial, Egypt, Column 243. 502  
(Ulster) Squadron WM, St Anne's Cathedral, Belfast

**1942**

**+KELLEHER, Michael Joseph**

RAF. Sergeant (Flight Engineer). 568970. Died 06/06/1942.  
Aged 21. 149 Sqdn. Son of James and Anne Kelleher, of  
Portstewart. Adegem Canadian War Cemetery, Belgium

**D DAY 1944**

**+BASETT, Anthony Hastings**

RNVR. Sub - Lieutenant (A). Died 06/06/1944. Age 21.  
Action off Normandy on D - Day. Memorial plaque in  
St.Columba's Parish Church, Omagh

**+REYNOLDS, Edward Eli**

South Wales Borderers, 2nd Btn. Serjeant. 3907378. Died  
06/06/1944. Aged 33. Husband of Elizabeth Reynolds, of  
Waterside, Londonderry. Bayeux War Cemetery, Calvados,  
France

**+ROWE, William John**

Gordon Highlanders, 5/7th Btn. Private. 7011445. Died  
06/06/1944. Aged 29. The Gordon Highlanders landed at  
Juno Beach between 1400hrs and 1700hrs, where they  
faced little opposition. Their landing craft, however, were in  
5 to 6 feet of water as the men disembarked. The current  
swept Private Rowe beneath a nearby landing craft and he  
drowned before having a chance to make it ashore. Son of

Thomas and Isabella Rowe, of Lisnaskea, Co. Fermanagh.  
Bayeux War Cemetery, Calvados, France

### **+YOUNG, James**

A.A.C. The Parachute Regiment, 9th Btn. Serjeant.  
6977467. Died 06/06/1944. Aged 28. Son of John Joseph  
and Mary Elizabeth Young, of Omagh. Ranville War  
Cemetery, Calvados, France

**1946**

### **+CUSHNIE, William Joseph**

Pioneer Corps . Private. 2075415. Died 06/06/1946. Aged  
27. Son of Mr. and Mrs. William Cushnie, of The Maze, Co.  
Down; husband to Isabella Cushnie, of The Maze. Hamburg  
Cemetery

## **VETERANS**

### **CAREY, Bruce Thomson**

RNVR. Lt. Cdr. in Command, Minesweepers. Mentioned in  
despatches. Born 06/06/1902, son of J. W. Carey,  
Knockdene Park, Knock. Campbell College. Died Aberdeen.

### **MOORE, William James "Billy"**

Served with 2nd Battalion of the Royal Ulster Rifles, landing  
on Sword Beach. See article above. Died 06/06/2009

**Every Day is a Remembrance Day**  
***We will remember them***

## On This Day - June 06

### 1915

German Zeppelin raid on the English east coast. A reported 24 killed and 30 injured.



### 1918

36th (Ulster) Division Headquarters closes at Dragon Camp, the 36th (Ulster) Division Line is handed over to the 12th Infantry Division, Belgium Army. Major General Coffin VC Divisional Headquarters moves to Couthove Chateau outside Proven (Photo above).

The Battle of Belleau Wood begins as the U.S. Marine Corps attacks the Germans across an open field of wheat, suffering huge casualties. The battle lasts until 26.

The Germans capture the village and height of Bligny ( SW of Reims). The height is later retaken by the British.

## **1940**

Production of hundreds of household goods banned in Britain. All Germans and Austrians living in UK ordered to surrender their wireless sets.

Air raids along many parts of East Coast of England.

U-46 sinks the British armed merchant cruiser Carinthia off the west coast of Ireland.

German tanks in groups of 200 300 break through French line in two places on Somme front and Rommel's 7th Panzer Division advancing to the West of Amiens, penetrates 20 miles into French territory. During these breakthrough's the Germans suffer heavy losses at Amiens and Petonne.

## **1941**

Hitler issues a directive for the implementation of the Kommissarbefehl (Commissar Order) which calls for the summary execution of all Soviet political commissars attached to the Red Army. This order is tacitly disobeyed by most German army and corps commanders who deem it contrary to German military custom and tradition.

Act authorizing acquisition of idle foreign merchant ships by the US is approved.

## **1942**

A German bomb, undiscovered for 13 months explodes. 19 people are killed, more than 50 injured and 300 families made homeless.

German troops execute every male in the Czech village of Lidice (Bohemia) and then set fire to village in response to Heydrich's death.

## 1944

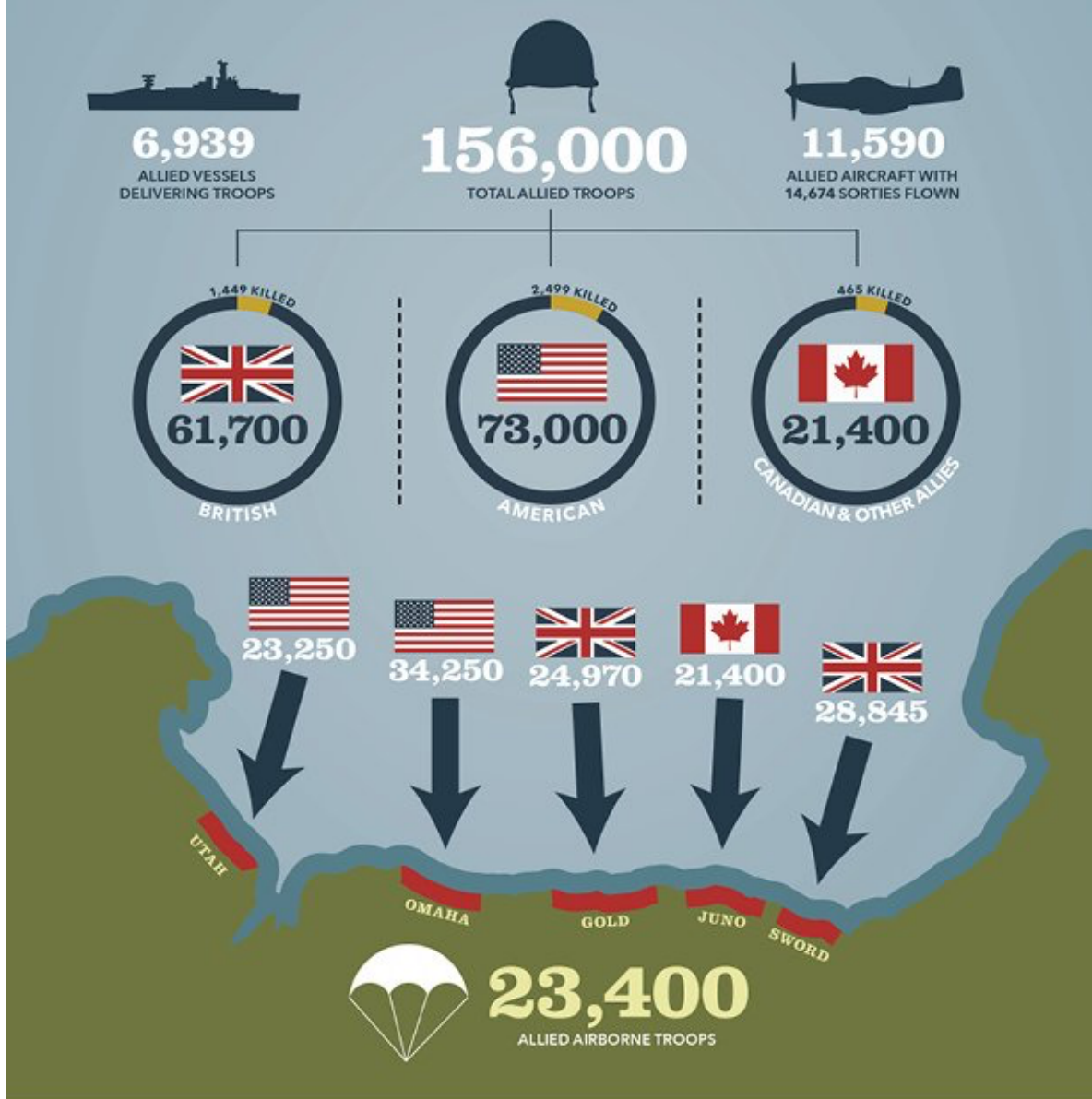
Shortly after midnight on 6 June 1944, paratroops from the British 6th Airborne division landed near Pegasus Bridge in Normandy. Operation Overlord had begun – the Allied invasion of German-occupied Europe.

**Admiral Ramsay in command for Dunkirk evacuation and D Day**



**Operation Neptune** landed 156,000 Allied troops on 5 beaches in Normandy as part of the invasion of Europe under

# D-DAY IN NUMBERS



history**extra**.com

**Operation Overlord. 6833 ships were used including 5,300 warships and landing craft, 78% of which are British under Royal Navy, Adm. Ramsay**

Before dawn, the Allied Expeditionary Force of British, American, Canadian, Polish, and Free French troops begins Operation Overlord, the long-awaited invasion of France.

On D Day, Operation Neptune, landed 156,000 Allied troops on 5 beaches in Normandy as part of the invasion of Europe under Operation Overlord. 6833 ships were used including 5,300 warships and landing craft, 78% of which are British under Royal Navy Adm. Ramsay

By the end of July over one million troops were entrenched in Normandy and the war could be taken to Germany's front door.

The Royal Navy loses the Destroyers Wrestler and Svenner, which was Norwegian.

The French take Tivoli in Italy.

## **1945**

The Anniversary of D-Day, sees Eisenhower order a holiday for troops in Europe. Allied casualties from D-Day to VE-Day were 776,967 of which 141,590 were killed.

Naha airbase on Okinawa is now being used to hit Japan.

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

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

To receive a copy of **remembrance ni** or notice of new postings on web site please contact -  
[houston.mckelvey@btinternet.com](mailto:houston.mckelvey@btinternet.com)

**Contact** - Simply input Remembrance ni in the title bar and give your first and second names with e-mail address in body of text. There is also a contact facility on the web site. See Menu at <https://remembranceneni.org/>

---