



remembrance ni



Serre Road No 1 Cemetery near the Somme on the way to
Loos

Spike Milligan served in tough times alongside Royal Ulster Rifles in 1943

The deaths of Riflemen Hamilton, Ruddock and Scott
occurred on this day in 1943 during a major German

offensive against the British Y Division, an ad hoc formation commanded by Brigadier Nelson Russell of Lisburn, the commander of 38 (Irish) Brigade.

Four German battlegroups were committed and two battalions of Sturmregiment Koch, a Fallschirmjaeger formation, attacked the area held by 2nd London Irish Rifles, a battalion that had already suffered heavily on Point 286 a month before.

Many of the Rifles' positions were overrun, including those on Stuka Ridge, where Gunner Spike Milligan of 56th Heavy Regiment, Royal Artillery, earned a Mention in Despatches.

John Lofting and Colin Gibbs' companies held firm while two companies of 1st Royal Irish Fusiliers and one of 6th Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers made a series of counter-attacks that led to the relief of the LIR companies; B Company of the Royal Irish Fusiliers also cleared Stuka Ridge. Six Churchill tanks of the North Irish Horse supported the counter-attacks.

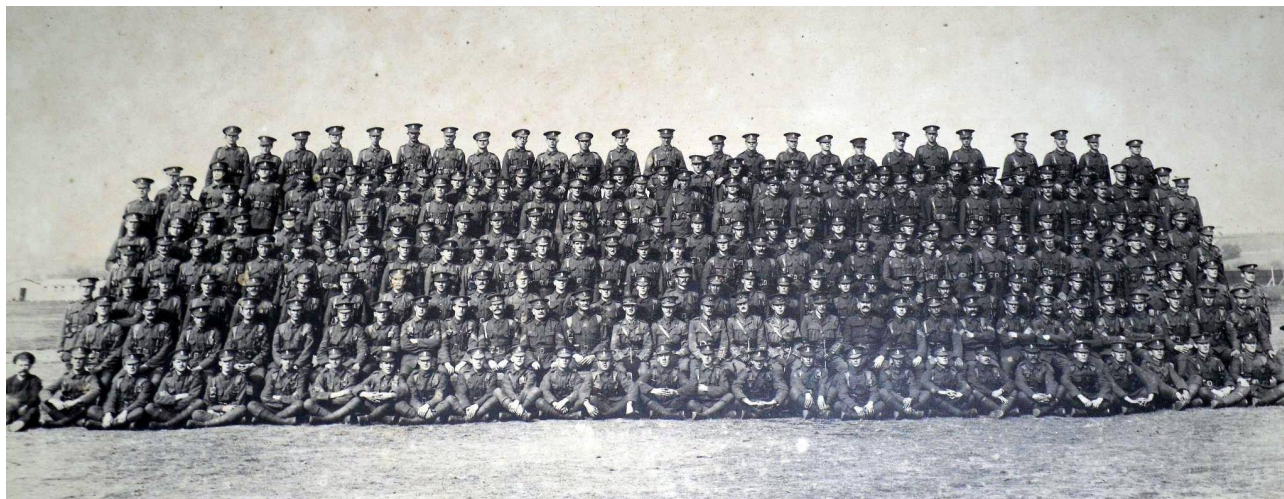
On this Day – February 26

On this day

26th February 1915 Belfast Newsletter

Inspection at Newtownards and Clandeboye.

Major-General L.B. Friend, C.B., Commander-in-Chief of the



Men of the 12th Battalion Royal Irish Rifles. The paper does not state which company

Forces in Ireland, continued his inspection of Ulster Division camps yesterday, when he saw the 108th Infantry Brigade, beginning with the 12th Battalion Royal Irish Rifles, at Newtownards Camp, under Lieutenant-Colonel R.C.A. McCalmont, M.P. The General subsequently motored to Clandeboye, where he inspected the 11th and 13th Royal Irish Rifles and 9th Royal Irish Fusiliers. A detachment of the last-named regiment is about to undertake a recruiting tour of Counties Monaghan and Cavan. A beginning was made at Clones yesterday afternoon, and the towns to be visited include Cootehill, Ballybay, Monaghan, and Castleblaney. The party returns to headquarters on Wednesday next.

26th February 1915 - The Witness -

AWARDS TO ULSTER REGIMENTS

THE ROYAL IRISH RIFLES.

To be extra Aide-de-Camp to the King and to be Brevet-Colonel -- Lieutenant-Colonel W. D. Bird, D.S.O.

Promotion to Captain -- Second-Lieutenant J. Martin.

To be a Companion of the Distinguished Service Order --
Lieutenant S. S. Dillon.

THE ROYAL INNISKILLING FUSILIERS.

To be C.M.G. -- Lieutenant-Colonel C. A. Wilding.

To be a Companion of the D.S.O. -- Captain G. R. V.
Steward.

DISTINGUISHED CONDUCT MEDALS.

Private H. Gamble, 10356, 2nd Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers.

Private J. Johnston, 8666, 2nd Royal Irish Rifles.

Sergeant W. O'Lone, 7511, 2nd Royal Irish Rifles.

Lance Corporal A. Osbaldston, 7284, 1st Royal Irish Rifles.

Private W. Shearer, 6055, 2nd Battalion Royal Irish Rifles.

Sergeant G. Thompson, 8650, 2nd Battalion Royal
Inniskilling Fusiliers.

Corporal J. Thompson, 9089, 2nd Battalion Royal
Inniskilling Fusiliers.

MILITARY CROSS FOR BELFAST DOCTORS.

Amongst the recipients of the decorations graciously
awarded by the King for gallantry on the field are the
following Belfast doctors, who have been awarded the
Military Cross -- Captain W. B. Purdon, M.B.; Lieut. W.
M'Cullagh, M.B.; and Lieut. W. Tyrrell, M.B.

Three chaplains have also been awarded the Military
Cross -- The Rev, H. W. Blackburne, M.A.; the Rev. the Hon.
M. B. Peel, and the Rev. A. H. Boyd, M.A.

QUEEN'S ROLL OF HONOUR

Rev. Dr. Hamilton, Vice-Chancellor of the Queen's
University, in a letter to the Press, congratulates on behalf of
the University the following distinguished Queensmen

whose names are mentioned in Sir John French's despatch for gallant service in the field --

Brigadier-General the Rev. J. M. Sims, D.D., principal chaplain of the Expeditionary Force.

Major F. S. Irvine, M.B., Royal Army Medical Corps, son of the late well-remembered Canon Irvine, of this city.

Captain W. Brooke Purdon, M.B., son at another well-known Belfast physician, and himself noted, among other things, as an international footballer.

Captain T. M. Phillips, R.A.M.C., killed in action, son of the late Rev. J. G. Phillips, of Damascus.

Lieutenant J. V. Atkinson, 2nd Essex Regiment.

Lieutenant J. L. Jackson, son of the Rev. John Jackson, B.D., Ballycastle.

Lieutenant W. M. H. M'Cullagh, M.B., winner in his student days of the M'Quitty Memorial Prize at the Royal Victoria Hospital.

Lieutenant J. M. Pirrie, M.B., a grandson of a former well-remembered Belfast physician.

Second-Lieutenant C. E. Cooke, 3rd Battalion of the Royal Irish Fusiliers, son of Mr. Alexander Cooke Belfast.

Lieutenant William Tyrrell, M.B., medical officer of the 2nd Lancashire Fusiliers, the son of the High Sheriff of Belfast, and himself well known as one of our foremost athletes.

Rev. Joseph Lynn, B.A., B.D., acting chaplain to the Expeditionary Force.

These men, adds the Vice-Chancellor not only brought high and unwonted honour to themselves, but to their alma mater and all Ulster, and may be assured that their names will live in our history for evermore.

- The Witness



1915

Lt Cdr (later Rear Admiral) Eric Gascogne Robinson earns VC by single handedly destroying a Turkish Gun battery during the Gallipoli campaign. He was commanding a landing party from HMS Vengeance.

1916

At the Battle of Verdun the Germans capture Fort Douaumont. At Poivre Hill the French counter attack and repulse the Germans.

1918

Miss Katy Beaufoy, Matron drowned when HMHS Glenart Castle was torpedoed. The Captain, 8 nurses, 7 Medical officers, 47 medical orderlies and 99 patients were lost.

1936

Japanese military troops march into Tokyo to conduct a coup and assassinate political leaders.

1940

US War Department activates Air Defense Command under Brig. Gen. James Chaney.

1941



1941

Over 300,000 Dutch workers strike in defence of persecuted Dutch Jews and against the anti-Jewish measures and activities of the Nazis. By 27 February, much of it had been suppressed by the German police. Dutch protest Nazi measures against the Jews, German soldiers fire on

protesters in Amsterdam, 9 killed, hundreds arrested. By 27 February, much of it had been suppressed by the German police.

Franco, in response to Hitler's appeal to enter the war, says 'I stand today already at your side, entirely and decidedly at your disposal,' but refuses to enter the war.

British take the Somali capital in East Africa.

1942

The RAF launches an attack against the battleship Gneisenau, which is being repaired at Kiel's floating dock. The damage caused is severe and the battleship is never again put to sea under her own power.



Churchill exhorts General Auchinleck (above) to launch an offensive against the German and Italian forces that are gathering in front of the Gazala line. He reminds Auchinleck that the longer he waits, the more time Rommel will have to rebuild his strength. To this General Auchinleck reply's that his intention is to first build up an armoured striking force as

quickly as possible and strengthen the defenses of the Gazala line. Only then would he mount a major offensive, which he advised Churchill would be in early June.

While carrying Army fighters to the Netherlands East Indies, the first U.S. carrier, the USS Langley, is sunk by Japanese bombers.

1943

26th February 1943, 2 LIR on Stuka Ridge: 0650 E Coy HQ attacked from a wadi NE of their positions. Very heavy mortar bombing on G Coy & towards Bn HQ. 0715 Enemy attack on Castle Hill. Successful & they now occupy it. 1035 Stuka Farm attacked from behind forward positions.

26th February 1943, 2 LIR on Stuka Ridge: Casualties sustained were: Maj CAF Gibbs wounded, Capt VJA Lillie-Costello MC wounded, Capt CJ Reidy wounded. 20 other ranks killed, 48 other ranks wounded & 25 other ranks missing.

BounArada

Frank Janes, who was awarded the Military Medal for his actions on 26th February 1943, was killed 20 months later north of Florence at Monte Spaduro... 21 London Irish Riflemen were killed on Stuka Ridge 78 years ago today including 16 yo Charles Hamilton QS FAB.

26th-28th February 1943, 1 RIRF in Tunisia:

"Major BH Butler took command of half a squadron of 142 RAC, A Coy 1 RIRF & one group of 72 A/Tk Regiment to deal

with the threat created by a force of enemy tanks with lorried infantry moving down the road Medjez-el-Bab to El Aroussa."

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Von Arnim launches a five-day counter attack in northern Tunisia, gaining some ground. Montgomery issues the plan Operation 'Pugilist', which is to smash the Mareth defensive Line in southern Tunisia.

U.S. B-17 Flying Fortresses and B-24 Liberators pound German docks and U-boat lairs at Wilhelmshaven.

1944

Bad weather ends 'Big Week', during which 26 German aircraft production related factories are hit putting German monthly production down by 20%.

Japanese retreat from Sinzweya, Burma, ending "Battle of the Admin Box," as British troops relieve trapped Indian troops.

1945

The attacks by the US Ninth Army into the Hurtgen Forest make little progress.

US Ninth Army reaches Rhine south of Düsseldorf.

Army Group Courland repulses heavy Red Army attacks in

the area of Prekuln.

Syria declares war on Germany and Japan.

U.S. Marines land on Verde Island, to the Southeast of Manila.

Roll of Honour – February 26

Representing their comrades who died on this day

1915

PACKENHAM, William H

Connaught Rangers. 2nd Bn. Lance Corporal. 7765.

26/02/1915. Londonderry. Colchester Cemetery, Essex

1916

+CONWAY, Francis James

Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, 3rd Btn. Private. 10520. Died

26/02/1916. Age 26. Son of the late John and Bridget

Conway (nee Daily), of Drumnakilly, Sixmilecross. Beragh

Roman Catholic Churchyard

+McGREGOR, John

Royal Irish Fusiliers. Private. 6080. Died 26/02/1916. Age

33. Son of John and Mary McGregor, of 11, Kiln St., Newry.

Newry Old Chapel Roman Catholic Cemetery

1917

+CHRISTIE, John Francis

Royal Dublin Fusiliers, 10th Btn. Private. 25106. Died 26/02/1917. Age 24. Son of John and Isabella Christie, of 12, Stranmillis Park, Belfast. Theipval Memorial, France

+McMICHAEL, Joseph

Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, 2nd Btn. Private. 11689. Died 26/02/1917. He may have come from Linenhall Street, Ballymena, but connections with the town are tenuous. He was born around Ballymoney but had been in Belfast for a long time. He and his sister Hessie were in the 1901 Irish census recorded as residents of the Balmoral Industrial Schools, set up after 1868 to care for "neglected, orphaned and abandoned children". Hessie later lived in the city at 35 Upper Meadow Street. Balmoral Industrial School was set up in West End (now Musgrave) Park, Balmoral and was to



Rangoon Memorial

accommodate 100 boys. Joseph McMichael passed through its portals, though his name does not occur on the institution's Roll of Honour. Fouquescourt British Cemetery, Somme, France

+MURPHY, P

Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, 2nd Btn. Private. 316840. Died 26/02/1917. Age 22. Son of Patrick and Rose McAuley, of 12, Fairfield St., Crumlin Rd., Belfast. Peronne Communal Cemetery Extension, France

1918

+STEPHENSON William Thomas Steer

Army Service Corps. Private. M/346028. Died 26/02/1918. Aged 17. Born on 10/05/1900 in Bangor Demesne, Bangor. Son of William James and Mary Louise Stevenson (nee Maltman) who were married on 04/10/1899 in St Comgall's C of I Parish Church, Bangor. They had at least two children. William Thomas Steer Stephenson was baptised in Bangor Parish Church. The Stephenson family lived with Mary's parents, Henry and Agnes Maltman, in the townland of Corporation, Bangor. Later they moved to Bangor Demesne. Thomas Stephenson worked as a gardener in the Castle Demesne before he enlisted in Belfast. He died as the result of heart failure in Aldershot Hospital. His remains were brought to Bangor on 1 March and lay overnight in Bangor Parish Church. His funeral with military honours took place on 02/03/1918. The chief mourners were his grandfather, Henry Maltman, and his brother Edward Stephenson. Thomas's father wasn't told about his son's death until the following week because he had just

undergone a serious operation in Bangor Hospital. Bangor Abbey Churchyard. Bangor and District WM. Royal British Legion (Bangor Branch) Memorial Plaque. St. Comgall's C of I Parish Church, Bangor

1942

+MULVENNA, Thomas

Cameronians (Scottish Rifles). 1st Bn. Rifleman. 3245219. Died 26/02/1942. Age 27. He joined up in Glasgow in 1934 and served in Palestine during the troubles of 1936-37. After a few weeks leave he was sent to India. A keen athlete he was a frequent winner and also a winning boxer. Four of his brothers were serving in the forces. Second son of James and Margaret Mulvenna, of Ballymena. Rangoon Memorial (Above), Face 10.

+WILSON, Richard

Royal Ulster Rifles, 1st Btn. Rifleman, No. 7013415 . Died 26/02/1942, as a result of shock following injuries caused by a bomb explosion. The son of Elizabeth Hogg of Belfast. Belfast City Cemetery, Glenalina Extension.

1943

+HAMILTON, Charles

Royal Ulster Rifles, London Irish Rifles, 2nd Btn. Rifleman. 7019478. Died 26/02/1943 when German forces attacked the Djebel Rihane (Jabal ar Rayhan) area west of the road between Bou Arada (Bu Aradah) and Goubellet (Quballa). Son of the late John Hamilton and Mary Hamilton of Racecourse Road, Shantallow, Co. Londonderry. Medjez-el-Bab War Cemetery, Tunisia.

+REID, Robert Alexander

Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, 6th Btn. Lance Corporal.
6979136. Died 26/02/1943. Age 20. Son of Alexander and Elizabeth Reid, of Rasharkin. Medjez-el-Bab War Cemetery, Tunisia

+RUDDOCK, William George Donaldson

Royal Ulster Rifles, London Irish Rifles, 2nd Btn. Rifleman.
7014282. Died 26/02/1943 when German forces attacked the Djebel Rihane (Jabal ar Rayhan) area west of the road between Bou Arada (Bu Aradah) and Goubellet (Quballa). Aged 20. Son of Samuel Ruddock and Esther Ruddock of Belfast. Medjez-el-Bab War Cemetery, Tunisia.

+SCOTT, David Lowry

Royal Ulster Rifles, London Irish Rifles, 2nd Btn. Rifleman.
7018891. Died 26/02/1943 when German forces attacked the Djebel Rihane (Jabal ar Rayhan) area west of the road between Bou Arada (Bu Aradah) and Goubellet (Quballa). Aged 22. Son of David Lowry Scott and Annie Scott of 13 Hilden Avenue, Lisburn. Before the outbreak of the Second World War, David worked for Messrs. William Barbour and Sons in Hilden and was a member of Lisburn CLB. He enlisted in the early years of the war and had 2.5 years' service at his time of death. Medjez-el-Bab War Cemetery, Tunisia.

1945

+SHANKS, Joseph

Royal Artillery. Gunner. 1465491. Died 26/02/1945. Aged 34.
539 Bty., 157 H.A.A. Regt. Son of Thomas and Susan

Shanks; husband to Emma Mary Shanks, of Bangor, Co. Down. Southend-on-Sea (Sutton Road) Cemetery, Essex

1947

+WATSON, Henry De Landre

RAFVR. Flight Lieutenant. 148537. Died 26/03/1947. Age 23. 48 Sqdn. Royal Air Force Pre-Entry Course in 1941-1942 at QUB. Served with RAF 1913 - 45. After the war, Henry remained in South East Asia with RAF 48 Squadron.. He was pilot of a Dakota KK120 on a regular flight over South China Seas between Singapore and Saigon. It disappeared and no trace of the aircraft was found, and weather may have been a factor. Born 29/01/1924. Son of Charles Sydney Waller Watson and of Esme M. Watson (nee de Landre), of Stramore House, Gilford. Singapore Memorial, Changi, Malaya, Column 460. now transferred to Kranji War Memorial, Singapore. Gilford WM. Dollingstown WM. QUB WM

VETERAN

HEMMING, Geoffrey William

RNAS/ RAF. Flight Sub Lieutenant.DCS. A flying ace credited with six aerial victories. He joined 4 Naval Squadron just after its foundation. It was equipped with Sopwith Pups, and based at Ostend, Belgium. Hemming piloted Pup No. N6177 to victory over a Siemens-Schuckert D.I, destroying it on 12/05/1917. He switched to No. N6199 for his victories on 6 June, when he destroyed another

Siemens Schuckert D.I, and drove a third one down out of control. He then upgraded to Sopwith Camel No. B3841 for his triple win on 22/8/1917, when he drove down three Albatros DVs out of control. He was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross, "In recognition of his services with a Wing of the RNAS at Dunkirk between March and September, 1917, during which period he has been continuously employed on the Belgian coast, and on many occasions has been in charge of a flight. On 22 September 1917, he led his flight against a formation of twenty enemy aircraft, and engaging three consecutively, brought them all down."

Geoffrey Hemming married Dorothy May Woods, daughter of Mr. and Mrs R. J. Woods, of Princetown Lodge, Bangor, on 07/02/1923 at St. Comgall's Parish Church, Bangor. Dorothy Hemmings' son, Desmond Wettern, was Naval Correspondent of The Daily Telegraph. Geoffrey William Hemming perished in a flying accident with a Fairey III D at RAF Calshot on 26/02/1926.

**Every day is a Remembrance
Day**

We will remember them

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

Information about individuals who served - please forward to remembrance ni at email below

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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