



remembrance ni



Father of actor and WW2 paratrooper Richard Todd

Among those remembered today is Andrew Todd, a medical officer from Derry and Moneymore, who served in both World Wars. He was the father of actor Richard Todd.

Richard was one of the first members of the Parachute Regiment to jump on D-day – a real-life role he later echoed, albeit at a higher rank, in the film *The Longest Day* (1962).

Operation Dickens, the third battle of Cassino began this day in 1944

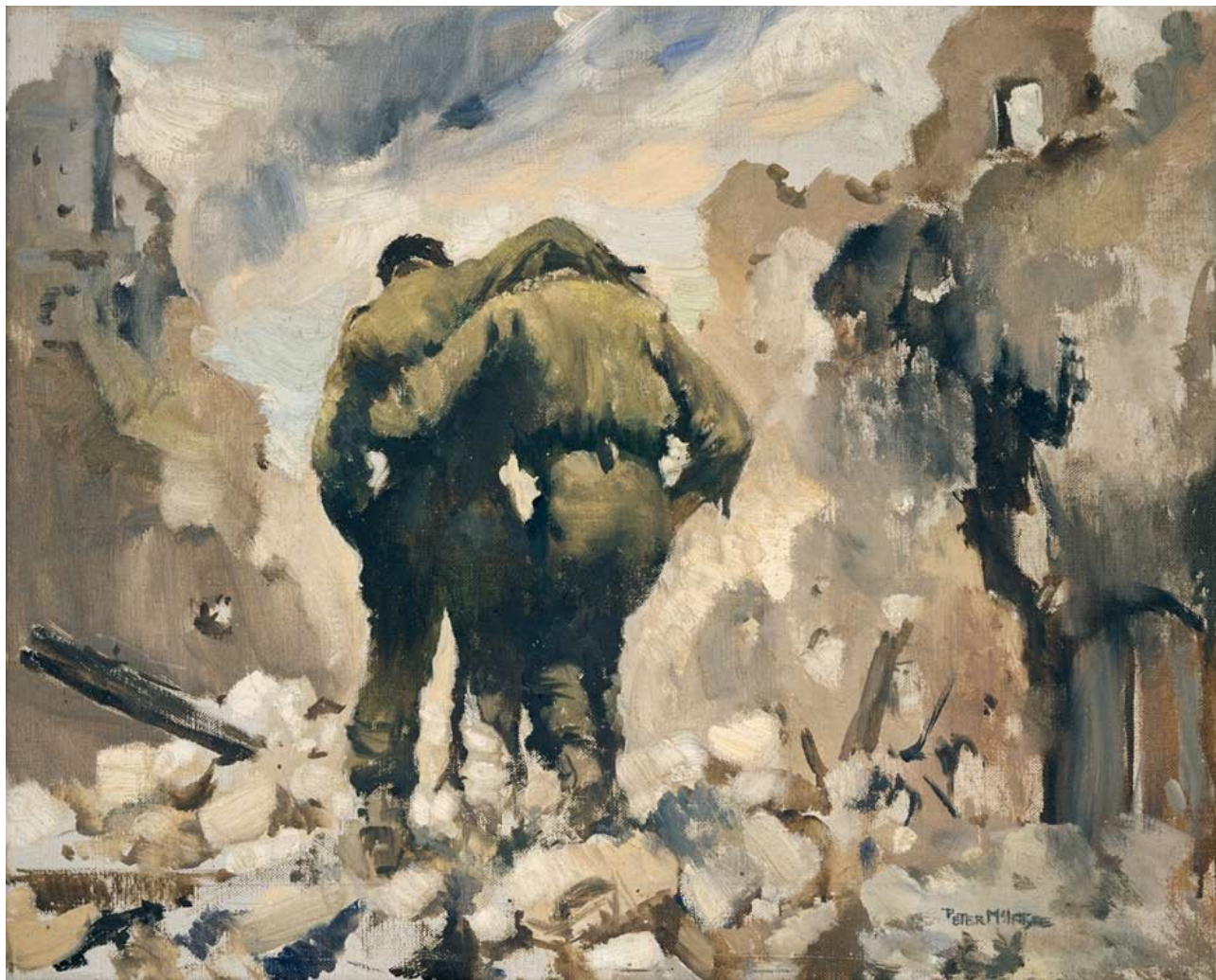
Taking Cassino on the road to Rome depended on the effectiveness of a planned bombing campaign.

The allies pound Cassino dropping 1,250 tons of bombs and firing 195,969 shells in seven and a half hours, but the troops made slow headway. This delay allowed the Germans to replace the German troops defending Cassino with elite Fallschirmjager (paratroops).

The success of the 15 March attack depended on taking the tactically important Castle Hill. The 6th New Zealand Brigade attacked Cassino as part of the Allies' advance on Rome. One New Zealand battalion did manage to seize Castle Hill.

In conditions reminiscent of the First World War, Allied armour and infantry were held up by bomb craters that flooded as heavy rain set in, turning the rubble into a morass. Communications were difficult and progress was slow.

Troops had been waiting three weeks in freezing rain for suitable weather for an aerial assault. Bombarded from air and land, Cassino was reduced to a pile of rubble. But the



German defenders rallied quickly and put up staunch resistance.

Finally on the 23rd of March the attack was called off and allied troops withdrew to consolidate the small gains they had made. The third battle of Cassino had been won by the German defenders.

This was one of four assaults on the German defences at Cassino between January and May. On 23 March all attacks were halted and the New Zealanders went on the defensive. Cassino did not fall until 18 May 1944. The New Zealand Division played a significant part in this campaign. By the

time it was withdrawn in early April, 343 New Zealanders had lost their lives. Cassino did not fall until 18 May 1944. when it was occupied by Polish troops supported by New Zealand artillery.

On this Day – March 15

Presentation to Lisburn sailor after River Plate battle

William J Moffatt, RN. Stoker First Class, was in HMS Exeter at the battle of the River Plate. A presentation was made to him in Lisburn cinema at a midnight matinee in aid of Lisburn Navy, Army and Air Force Fund. (Lisburn Standard 15/03/1940). Son of Mr Thomas Moffatt.

Coleraine Marine's wedding

Bill Balmer, RM, was born in Coleraine on 12th July, 1922, son of William and Annie in Adams Place, which is opposite the Union St., Orange Hall. Eden Elementary School. Worked for Boyds Engineering, Bendooragh. Inspired by his father's account of the Royal Marines at Gallipoli, he enlisted and travelled to Deal.

Due to the onset of war in September 1939, training was condensed. Engagements at Boulogne and Calais followed. Taken prisoner 26/04/1940 and marched into Germany to

Stalag VIII -B where the prisoners were made to work 12 hour days. Liberated 02/05/1945.

Married Elizabeth Anne McKinney 15/03/1947. In 1949 he volunteered for and completed the Commando course and was posted to Malaya with 3 Commando Brigade. After tours in Malta and North Africa, he completed his service on 11/07/1953. He then completed 31 years as a postman covering a daily route of 22 miles each day. Served in the RUSC and later joined UDR serving from 1972 - 79.

Chairman of Ballymoney Branch RBL 1972 - 79. His wife was awarded the Legion's Award Bar for outstanding service to the Women's Section. In 2004 a book titled, "My service life" written by Ronnie Gamble, was published. Brother of Andy, Mary, Nettie and Annie. His funeral was from St. Patrick's Parish Church to Ballymoney Cemetery. - Based on a report in Ballymoney Times, 19/07/2011.

1935

Joseph Goebbels, German Minister of Propaganda bans four Berlin newspapers.

1939

Germany occupies Bohemia and Moravia, Czechoslovakia.

1941

(Next page) A German soldier inspects bullet holes on a



Soviet BT-7 cavalry tank, probably knocked-out by a anti tank rifle

Roosevelt broadcasts to the nation announcing 'the end of compromise with tyranny.

The British 'Northern Force' having concentrated the 4th and 5th Indian Divisions begin their offensive for Italian fortress of Keren in Eritrea.

German battleships Scharnhorst and Gneisenau sink 15 Allied ships in the North Atlantic over next two days.

1942

U-503 is sunk near the Grand Banks, off Newfoundland, by another aircraft from the US squadron, VP-82.

Norwegian resistance members seize ship SS Galtesundand sail to Britain.

Off Newfoundland, US Navy PBO Hudson sinks U-503, the same pilot (CPO Donald Mason) who had radioed “Sighted sub—sank same” in January, vindicating himself

1943



The first Royal Navy midget submarine X3, was launched on the River Hamble. These subs were used extensively for reconnaissance, survey and sabotage attack's and famously crippled the Tirpitz. Manned by 3-4 incredibly brave submariners, service was extremely dangerous

Germans re-capture Kharkov.

The climax of the Battle of the Atlantic: U-boats sink 21 ships, with only one U-boat lost.

The US Navy establishes numbered fleet system; fleets in the Pacific assigned odd numbers and those in the Atlantic even.

The deportation of the Jews of Salonica to Auschwitz began. The city was known as 'the Mother of Israel' for a reason: Before the Holocaust, Salonica, present-day Thessaloniki, Greece, was a major centre of Sephardic life and culture. But what was built over centuries was abruptly erased by the Nazis. Today, we remember.

1944

The heaviest RAF raid of war is made against Stuttgart, with 3,000 tons dropped from 863 bombers, for the loss of only 36 planes.

The Soviet 1st Ukrainian Front breaks through German defenses and reaches the Bug river, the starting point in 1941 for Operation 'Barbarossa'.

The U.S. 1st Cavalry Division lands on Manus in the Admiralty Islands.

The Japanese begin crossing the Chindwin for an advance against Kohima.

1945

Attacks by troops of the US First Army to expand the Remagen bridgehead further, meet with little success.

The Soviet 1st Ukrainian Front begins an offensive in the Ratibor area of Upper Silesia.

U.S. troops report slow progress on Luzon in the Philippines.

1949

Almost four years after the end of World War II, clothes rationing in Great Britain ends.

Roll of Honour – March 15

Representing their comrades who died on this day

1915

+BUCHANAN, James Herbert

Royal Irish Fusiliers, 4th Btn. attd. Leinster Regiment.

Lieutenant. Died 15/03/1915. Age 22. Son of George and Elizabeth Buchanan, of Ballyward, Banbridge. Dickebusch New Military Cemetery, Belgium

+FARLEY, Patrick

Royal Irish Rifles, 1st Btn. Rifleman. 9460. Died 15/03/1915.

Age 21. Son of John and Elizabeth Farley, of Belfast.

Boulogne Eastern Cemetery

+McALLISTER, H

Royal Irish Rifles. 12th Btn. Rifleman. 3712. Died 15/03/1915. Victoria Cemetery, Carrickfergus.

1916

+KING, C

Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, 9th Btn. Private. 24759. Died 15/03/1916. Age 17. From Omagh. Forceville Communal Cemetery, France

+MOFFETT, Samuel McWha

Royal Irish Rifles, 11th Btn. (South Antrim Volunteers). Rifleman. 18/97. Died 15/03/1916. Age 29. Born 19/03/1886 in Ballyleidy (Clandeboy), Bangor. Son of Thomas Moffett, a labourer, and his wife Elizabeth Moffett (nee Russell). He was the youngest of their nine children. The family moved shortly after to Ballymullen, Crawfordsburn. Samuel was a clerk. He was a member of Bangor Commercial L.O.L. 477. (Northern Whig, 25/03/1916). Forceville Communal Cemetery and Extension. Ballygilbert Presbyterian Church WM. Family memorial in Bangor Cemetery

+PENMAN, Charles

Royal Irish Rifles, 14th Btn. Lance Serjeant. 16936. Died 15/03/1916. Age 19. Son of Mrs. A. Penman, of 10, Lyle St., Belfast. Hamel Military Cemetery, Beaumont-Hamel, France

+SHERMAN, William

Royal Army Medical Corps. 16th Gen. Hosp. Corporal. 51723. Died 15/03/1916. Age 35. Served in the South African Campaign, 1901-2. Son of Sarah and the late

Thomas Sherman, of Belfast, Ireland. Le Treport Military Cemetery, France

1917

+McGLADDERY, Thomas

Irish Guards. 2nd Btn. Private. 8833. Died 15/03/1917. Age 21 years old. In 1911 he was living with his family at Mullahead. He was one of four sons who had seven sisters. Son of William and Martha McGladdery, of Crobane, Newry. Saily-Saillisel British Cemetery, France

+STUART, Charles Erskine

Suffolk Regiment (Cyclist Battalion); attached to York and Lancaster Regiment. Captain. Died 15/03/1917 of wounds received in action on March 12/03/1917. Born May 25/05/1882, in Dergmoney, Omagh, Co. Tyrone. Son of Burleigh William Stuart. School, Bath College. Admitted as Major Scholar at Trinity College, Cambridge, 25/06/1901. College Classics Prize 1902. BA 1905, MA 1908. Ely Fellow 1907-17. Varennes Military Cemetery, Somme, France. Trinity College, Cambridge WM

1918

+ADAIR, A

Seaforth Highlanders, 1st/5th Btn. Private. 241194. Died 15/03/1918. Age 23. Son of Alexander and Jane Adair, of 31, Comber St., Belfast. Grevillers British Crevillers British Cemetery, France

+CRORKEN, Thomas

Royal Irish Fusiliers. 1st Btn. Private. 25051. Died 15/03/1918. Aged 21. Son of Michael and Margaret Crorken. Thomas was born on 18/02/1897 in Brookeborough, County Fermanagh. He was living in Cavans, Fivemiletown when he enlisted in Armagh on 16/11/1916 with the 3rd Btn. of the Royal Irish Fusiliers. Following training, Private Thomas Crorken was posted to the 1st Battalion and arrived in France on 23/05/1917. Thiepval Memorial, Somme, France. Fivemiletown WM

+HUDSON, William

Royal Irish Rifles, 12th Btn. Rifleman. 8/14797. Died 15/03/1918. Age 27. Born Steeple, Antrim 08/07/1892. Worked as a riveter pre-war. Son of Mrs. N. Hudson, of 69, Sandown Rd., Belfast; husband to Mrs. M. Hudson nee Patty, of Hibernia Cottage, Holywood, Co. Down, and father of Dorothy Kathleen b 1913. Tyne Cot Memorial, Belgium. Holywood (Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church. Holywood & District WM

+KEITH, William James

Royal Irish Rifles .14th (Service) Btn, (Young Citizen Volunteers). Lance-Corporal William James Keith, 14/15057, was discharged 11/04/1917, with Silver War Badge No.169821. William's brother Lance-Corporal Thomas Keith, 1st Battalion Royal Irish Fusiliers who was reported wounded, survived the war. Sons of William James and Maria Keith nee Geddis, of 1 Pottinger Street, Belfast. William sadly died of Pulmonary Tuberculosis 15/03/1918. Belfast City Cemetery. McQuiston Memorial Presbyterian

Church RH

+LENOX-CONYNGHAM, Hubert Maxwell

Fifth Army. Army Veterinary Corps. D S O, Mentioned in Despatches. Died 15/03/1918. Aged 47. He died of illness at Chester. D.D.V.S. He joined the Army Veterinary Service Corps in 1897. He served in East Africa (Somaliland Campaign) in 1902-03 and during the First World War. Born in Dublin. Son of Col. Sir William and Lady Lenox-Conyngham of Springhill House, Moneymore, and the brother of John Staples Molesworth Lenox-Conyngham.. Husband to Eva Lenox-Conyngham (nee Darley), of The Paddocks, Kilsby, Rugby. Kilgobbin Burial Ground, Dun Laoghaire, Co. Dublin. Desertlyn C of I RH, Coagh WM, Moneymore WM

1919

+LAIRD, Joseph J

Seaforth Highlanders, 7th Btn. Private. 241208. Died 15/03/1919 at war hospital in Southampton. Born Ballyclare 16/07/1898. Son of James and Isabella (nee Grange) Laird of Ballyclare. Isabella died in July 1900. Joseph lived with his aunt Lizzie Grange and her brother Hugh at Ashley Gardens, Ballyclare. Templepatrick Old Burial Ground. Ballyclare WM

1941

+BRYANS, William John

Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders, 2nd Btn. Corporal. Died 15/03/1941. Age 30. Enlisted with the Royal Inniskilling

Fusiliers before transferring to the Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders. At the outbreak of the war the battalion was in Egypt and remained in Africa in various places. Keren was the last Italian stronghold in Eritrea and the scene of the most decisive battle of the war in East Africa in February and March 1941. Son of John and Margaret Bryans, of Armagh. Keren War Cemetery, Eritrea, North Africa

1942

+JOHNSTON, George

RN. Ordinary Seaman. P/JX226247. HMS Vortigern. Died 15/03/1942. Aged 20. Convoy FS49 was attacked by E boats 17 miles north of Cromer.



Vortigern was sunk by torpedoes from S104 commanded by Oberlietenant Roeder. Son of George and Mary Johnston of Belfast, husband to Florence Johnston, 19 Barrow Street, Belfast. (Belfast Weekly Telegraph

27/03/1942). Portsmouth Naval memorial, Panel 66

+TODD, Andrew William Palethorpe

RAMC. Major. MM. Died 15/03/1942 of illness. Aged 49. Only son of Andrew and Ellen Todd. Andrew Todd (senior) was a county court judge and later Recorder for Londonderry. His son, Andrew was born about 1893 in Dublin City. He was educated at Trinity College in Dublin. He served with the RAMC in WWI and was awarded an MM. In 1922 he became a GP in Moneymore for four years. On the outbreak of WW2 he was recalled for service as captain

in the RAMC. Father of actor Richard Todd. Richard Andrew Palethorpe-Todd, actor, (born 11/06/1919; died 03/12/2009), was one of the first members of the Parachute Regiment to jump on D-day – a real-life role he later echoed, albeit at a higher rank, in *The Longest Day* (1962). Andrew Todd became ill and died of pneumonia on 15/03/1942 in England. Brookwood Military Cemetery, Surrey

1944

+HARRIS, James

RAF. Corporal. 541809. Died 15/03/1944. Aged 32. Son of William And Mary Jane Harris; Husband to Emma Harris, Belfast. Naples War Cemetery, Italy

+O'BRIEN, John

Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, 2nd Btn. Fusilier. 6980700. Died 15/03/1944. Age 21. Son of Lawrence and Josephine O'Brien, of Londonderry. Beach Head War Cemetery, Anzio, Italy

1945

+JOHNSTON, Norman Albert

Royal Ulster Rifles. The London Irish Rifles. 2nd Bn. Serjeant. 7018844. Died 15/03/1945. Aged 23. "Sergeant Johnston of G Coy was wearing his caubeen and hackle and it was believed that the hackle had been bobbing above the ground before Sgt Johnston raised his head. The marksman was waiting for a clear shot." Son of Henry and Elizabeth Johnston, of Bloomfield, Belfast. Faenza War Cemetery, Italy.

1946

+ADAMS, David

Royal Army Service Corps. Corporal. S/7018776. Died 15/03/1946. Age 25. Son of William and Annie Adams, of Londonderry. Husband to Annie (nee Wilson) Adams, daughter of John and Eliza Wilson of Drumadd, Armagh. St Mark's C of I Churchyard, Armagh

VETERANS

CRANSTON, William J.

Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, 10th Btn. Wounded 1918. Prior to enlisting worked to Thomas Johnston, Lisachrin and Station Road. Died 15/03/1959. Remains interred in Johnston family plot. Garvagh

GRANT, John S

Enlisted in the North Irish Horse between 4 and 10 March 1914. Private 920. He embarked for France with A Squadron on 17/08/1914, seeing action on the retreat from Mons and advance to the Aisne. John Grant remained with the regiment throughout the war. On 15 March 1919 he was demobilised and transferred to Class Z, Army Reserve.

UPRICHARD, James

Royal Irish Rifles (2nd County Down) (Pioneers). 16th (Service) Battalion. Private. 16/154. James was born in 1897 and was a Mill Worker from Ballymacanallen townland, Gilford, Co. Down, when he enlisted at the formation of the battalion. He embarked for France with the battalion in

October 1915 and served with them throughout the war. James was awarded a Divisional Certificate for gallant conduct during the German Spring Offensive, March 1918. He was transferred to Class Z Army Reserve on 15/03/1919 and returned to his former occupation.

Every day is a Remembrance Day

We will remember them

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

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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

Remembrance Ni, March 15

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