



remembrance ni



**Short Sunderland flying boats being
manufactured in Belfast**

On this Day – March 18

1917

Battle of Langemarck

Jack Bill (See Roll of Honour below) was killed, aged 22, on 18/08/1917 during the Battle of Langemarck (Third Ypres). Langemarck German cemetery in Belgium is the final resting place of around 44,000 German soldiers who fell during WW1. Hitler walked through the gates in 1940 on a battlefield tour, shortly after the Wermacht had overrun Belgium.

1940

Mussolini and Italy join Hitler in Germany's war against France and Britain

1941

Berlin suffers its first raid of the year by the RAF.

German troops on parade in the city of Cherbourg have their show spoiled when British bombers hit the parade ground in the middle of the event.

Rommel conducts a limited offensive to recapture El Agheila from the British, which succeeds with startling ease. This encourages Rommel to push forward towards Mersa Brega. British Somaliland is now clear of Italians.

1942

The British Government refuses to hold an inquiry into the loss of Singapore during a Lords debate.

The start of deportation of Slovak Jews to Auschwitz. The Japanese begin an intensive bombing campaign of Bataan and Corregidor. General Homma's 14th Army receives reinforcement ready for its final offensive against the Bataan and Corregidor. This takes the form of the Japanese 4th Division, which has been shipped from Shanghai.



1943

General Montgomery stops to chat with the crew of a bogged down Sherman tank. Sangro, Italy, 1943.

In the Yellow Sea near Port Arthur, US sub Wahoo sinks 3 Japanese cargo ships.

The first Chindit Raid ends (British/Indian raids in Japanese-occupied Burma); although one-third of men were lost, raid raised morale.

1944



In 1944. Anzio area, Italy. Men from 2 Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers reading the sports newspaper "Ireland's Saturday Night".

The US Fifth Army's bridgehead at Anzio is bombarded by German heavy long-range guns and Luftwaffe aircraft using guided bombs, causing severe casualties in men, ships and equipment. Persistent US and British attacks against the Gustav Line at Cassino are repulsed by the German defenders.

In response to the killing of 35 German soldiers in Rome by the Italian resistance, SS Colonel Herbert Kappler orders the execution of 335 Italians, at least 255 of whom are civilians in reprisal. All are shot by German troops in the Fosse Ardeantine caves outside of Rome.

A Russian tank army crosses the Dnieper near Czech border. Malinovsky makes crossings of the Bug near the Black Sea.

The Luftwaffe attacks London with 90 medium bombers (He-111s and Ju-88s), while the RAF bombs Berlin with 810 heavy Lancaster bombers. The RAF loses 72 bombers in this, the 16th and heaviest raid of war on Berlin. The 'Battle of Berlin' is now over.

Wingate, leader of the Chindits is killed in plane crash.

The Japanese counter-attack on Bougainville is decisively beaten.

President Roosevelt issues a statement condemning German and Japanese ongoing "crimes against humanity."

1945

Montgomery's 21st Army Group attacks across the Rhine, 15 miles North of Duisberg in the Wesel area, after 3,500-gun barrage. 16,870 paratroops land across the river Rhine

in Operation 'Plunder' and succeed in linking up with advancing British troops and establishing four bridgeheads. The US Third Army captures Speyer and Ludwigshafen on the upper Rhine.

US Fifteenth Air Force based in Italy sends 660 bombers to Berlin for first time as a diversion for Rhine crossings. The escorting 332nd Fighter Group (the African-American Tuskegee Airmen), shoots down 3 German Me 262 jets and earns Distinguished Unit Citation.

The 1st Ukrainian Front captures Neisse in Upper Silesia. U.S. Marines seize islands off coast of Okinawa in Pacific.

Roll of Honour – March 18

Representing their comrades who died on this day

1915

+GRAY, Samuel

1st Bn. Highland Light Infantry. Private. 8478. Died 18/03/1915. Aged 30. Born: Londonderry. Son of Mr. & Mrs. A. Gray, Ballysally, Coleraine. Lived: Coleraine. Enlisted: Glasgow. Le Touret Memorial, France

+KING, Francis

Highland Light Infantry. 1st Btn. Private. 8295. Died 18/03/1915. Worked as a ship's fitter prior to enlistment in September 1914. Born 02/10/1876 at Kilmore, Co. Armagh. Son of Thomas and Margaret (nee Hagan) King. Husband to Maggie (nee Kilpatrick) King of South St., Glasgow. They had three daughters. Le Touret Memorial, France

+WATTERS, W

Royal Irish Rifles. 9th Btn. Rifleman. 16086. Died 18/03/1915. Age 43. Husband of Margaret Watters, of 57, Princes St., Lurgan. Soldierstown C of I Churchyard

1916

+LAIRD, John Monteith

Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, 9th Btn. Serjeant. 19830. Died 18/03/1916. From Ardstraw, Strabane. Authuille Military Cemetery, Authuille, France

+MONTGOMERY, H

Royal Irish Rifles, 12th Btn. Rifleman. 6298. Died 18/03/1916. Auchonvillers Military Cemetery, Somme, France. Larne WM

+RAMSEY, R

Royal Irish Rifles, 12th Btn. Corporal. 7510. Died 18/03/1916. Auchonvillers Military Cemetery, Somme, France. Larne WM

+SPENCE, William

Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, 2nd Btn. Private. 3171. Age 20.

Son of William and Elizabeth Spence, of 58, Church St. East, Belfast. Mellencourt Communal Cemetery Extension, France

+WILSON Andrew

Royal Irish Rifles, 12th Btn. Rifleman. 571. Died 18/03/1916. Aged 32, Son of Andrew and Jane Wilson, Prospect Place, Ballymena. Ballymena Observer, April 1916 - "On Friday of last week intimation was received in Ballymena to the effect that Rifleman Andrew Wilson, Royal Irish Rifles, (Ulster Division) has been killed in action in France. Deceased's widowed mother and two brothers reside in Prospect Place, Harryville, Ballymena. The sad news was conveyed in a letter from Captain J.E. Jinks who writes under date 18th inst :- "Dear Mrs Wilson -It is my sad duty to write to you about your son Rifleman A Wilson (12571). He was working in the trenches this morning when a large shell came right into it and he was killed instantly. I deeply regret his loss as he was a really good soldier in A Company. He will be buried close to here tonight and I can assure you that you have the deepest sympathy of myself and that of his many chums." Auchonvillers Military Cemetery, Somme. Ballymena WM. 1st Ballymena Presbyterian Church RH

+WILSON, Andrew

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really good soldier in A Company. He will be buried close to here tonight and I can assure you that you have the deepest sympathy of myself and that of his many chums." Son of Jane and the late Andrew Wilson, of Prospect Place, Harryville, Ballymena. Auchonvillers Military Cemetery, Somme, France. Ballymena WM. 1st Ballymena Presbyterian Church RH

+WILSON, James Harold

Black Watch (Royal Highlanders), 1st Btn. Private. S/11126. Died 18/03/1916. Age 20. Son of James F. Wilson, of 40, Tennent St., Belfast. St Patrick's Cemetery, Loos, France

+WRIGHT, John

Royal Irish Rifles, 9th Btn. Rifleman. 796. Died 18/03/1916. Theipval Memorial, France

1917

+BILL, John Alexander Patterson

RAMC. Private. Later Second Lieutenant, Royal Irish Rifles attd 12th. Btn. A Queen's undergraduate in the Faculty of Arts, on the outbreak of war, Jack Bill enlisted as a Private with the Royal Army Medical Corps before receiving a commission in the 18th Battalion, Royal Irish Rifles in April 1917. Jack Bill was attached to the 12th Battalion, Royal Irish Rifles, when he was killed, aged 22, on 18/08/1917 during the Battle of Langemarck (Third Ypres)

Two of his fellow officers reported thus:

2nd Lt Branningan – "Mr Bill was hit before he got right over and his body was seen in front of our wire. Mr Bill was a



Sequehart is a village in the Department of the Aisne, 8 kilometres north-east of St. Quentin, and the Sequehart British Cemeteries No. 1 and No. 2 are just south of the road to Levergies. No. 2 cemetery contains 62 WW2 burials

great friend of mine."

2nd Lt Stokes – "This officer was last seen about map ref. D 19 b 10 90. He was lying on the ground apparently wounded in the groin or lower abdomen. Rifleman Matthews went out to dress him but was himself killed in the act of doing so, and it is supposed that the same bullet also hit Mr Bill. The men had by this time started coming back and Mr Bill was left behind apparently very seriously wounded."

The location identified is very close to Gallipoli Farm, just to the south of the Wieltje - Gravenstafel road. Jack Bill's body was not recovered

Jack Bill was born 08/07/1895 in Edinburgh, the son of Samuel Alexander and Grace Bill, who were missionaries. His grandfather was John Bill, a builder, of Downshire Park, Cregagh. Samuel Alexander Bill (born in Belfast, 1864; died in Nigeria, 1942) was raised in Ballymacarrett Presbyterian Church.

The 1901 Ireland Census return for 77 Upper Newtownards Road indicates that Jack Bill (aged 5) was living with his paternal grandfather and grandmother, John and Betsy Bill. The Fitzroy Avenue church magazine, The Courier, records that Jack Bill and his sister resided with the family of the Rev. William Colquhoun whilst their parents were in the mission field. John Bill entered RBAI in January 1907 and, in 1910, he briefly left to board at a school in County Cavan. While at RBAI, he was a member of the cricket first XI and the rugby first XV, until an accident cut short his sporting career. He also took part in the school's "dramatic entertainments".

The family's address when Jack died is recorded as the Mission House, Qua Iboe, Southern Nigeria – the 1911 Ireland Census records that Grace, Emma and Jack Bill lived at 61 University Street and the return is annotated to the effect that the Head of the Household was “absent in Qua Iboe, West Africa”. It had been Jack's intention was to



Sequehart British Cemeteries

follow his father as a missionary in Qua Iboe, an aspiration that was to be denied by the Great War.

After leaving RBAI, John went to QUB. He was awarded the Drennan Exhibition, which was given to the First Literary Scholar of RBAI students in their first year at QUB. His name is commemorated on the Tyne Cot Memorial in Flanders (Belgium) and RBAI WM.

+GIRVAN, James

Royal Irish Fusiliers, 9th Btn. A Coy. Private 19796. Died 18/03/1917 in hospital in Belfast. Age 18. Son of William and Annie J. Girvan (step-mother), of 71, Franklin St., Bridgeton, Glasgow. Born at Armagh. His remains were accompanied

by a firing party which gave the customary salute. St Mark's
C of I Churchyard, Armagh

1941

+CHAPMAN, Harold

Royal Air Force. 149 Sqdn. Sergeant (Wireless Operator).
522572. Died 18/03/1941 near RAF Mildenhall. Born in
Dungannon on 02/06/1918. He was the younger of two
sons. Grange Society of Friends Burial Ground,
Donaghedy. Moy WM, Dungannon WM

+TRAINER, James

RAF. James Aircraftman 2nd Class. 974540. Died
18/03/1941. Aged 24. Son of Patrick and Elizabeth Trainer,
Clough, Co. Down. Port Elizabeth (South End) Cemetery, S.
Extension. R.C. South Africa

1942

+FORREST, George

Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, 1st Btn. Fusilier. 6978191. Died
18/03/1942. Age 29. Son of Robert and Mary Forrest, of
Magilligan, Co. Londonderry. Rangoon Memorial, Myanmar

1943

+GORDON, John

RN. Ordinary Seaman. P/JX346235. Died 18/03/1943. Aged



Sequehart British Cemeteries

20. HMS Tynwald. Son of John and Minnie Gordon,
Ballymoney. Bushvale Presbyterian Churchyard.
Ballymoney WM

1943

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RN. Ordinary Seaman. P/JX346235. Died 18/03/1943. Aged
20. HMS Tynwald. Son of John and Minnie Gordon,
Ballymoney. Bushvale Presbyterian Churchyard.
Ballymoney WM

1944

+McGRATH, Gerard

Lancashire Fusiliers, 1st Btn. Fusilier. 6984205. Formerly Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers. Died 18/03/1944. Age 21. Son of Thomas and Margaret McGrath, of Newry. Rangoon Memorial, Myanmar

+O'DONNELL, James

The Loyal Regiment (North Lancashire). 1st Btn. Private. 6980232. Died 18/03/1944. Age 21. Son of Joseph and Martha O'Donnell, of Londonderry, Northern Ireland; husband of Kathleen O'Donnell, of Londonderry. Salerno War Cemetery, Italy

1947

+JOHNSTON, Joseph

Royal Hamilton Light Infantry, R.C.I.C. Private. B/36837. Died 18/03/1947. Age 46 years old. Son of Andrew and Martha Johnston, of Belfast, Northern Ireland; husband to Jeannie Johnston, of Freeman. Greenwood Cemetery, Burlington, Ontario, Canada

VETERANS

KANE, Vincent

Serjeant Vincent Kane (1455245) served in 8th Battery, 4th Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment, Royal Artillery, during the Second World War. He was the son of the late Peter Kane

and Mrs. Kane of 1 Park Road, Portadown, Co. Armagh, and husband to Maudie Kane of Laurencetown, Co. Down.

In civilian life, Vincent worked for Messrs. Spence Bryson in his hometown. Throughout the Second World War, he served in the Royal Artillery seeing action at Dunkirk and in Normandy.

Vincent Kane died on 18/03/1946 aged 30 years old. After returning from the Second World War, he had found employment with Harland and Wolff Shipyard Ltd. in Belfast. In a workplace accident, Vincent sustained fatal injuries, falling after receiving a blow to the head from metal piping. He underwent treatment at the Royal Victoria Hospital in Belfast.

Bugler Albert Turkington sounded The Last Post as members of the Royal British Legion acted as pallbearers at the funeral service on 20/03/March 1946.

McATAMNEY, Robert Samuel (Bobby)

RN. Petty Officer. Survivor of First Battle of Narvik 1940. On 10/04/1940, at 0430, Hardy, Hunter, and Havelock steamed into the harbour at Narvik leaving Hostile and Hotspur to guard the back door. Robert, known as 'Bobby' was an Able Seaman on HMS Hardy at the time of the Battle of Narvik. He was only twenty years old, and when the Hardy was sinking he managed to rescue a ship mate 'Tubby' Cox. He saw him floating unconscious in the water and dragged him to safety. They had a laugh about it afterwards, as Bobby said that Tubby only floated because of his size. Bobby had a as he plunged in to the icy waters and swam a shore. He was injured after being hit in the face by shrapnel and had part of his lip removed. After the ship had blown up and he

and the rest of the survivors were led to safety, he was given a ski suit, and that's what he wore to come home.

When he finally came home, the town was decorated with flags and bunting and the town's people lined the streets to welcome him home. At a ceremony at the Town Hall he was presented with a watch and a ring. When asked how he felt, he said" that he would look back on this day with pride".

One of six sons of William & Jane McAtamney who served in WW 2. Born 18/03/1920 at 24 Davys Street Carrickfergus. Died 1954. Brother of: Daniel McAtamney L. Cpl. R.A.F.; Francis McAtamney Flight Sgt. R.A.F.; George H. McAtamney A.B. R.N.; Thomas McAtamney O.S. R.N. And William McAtamney Sergt. Royal Inniskillings

Bobby McAtamney served in the Navy until 1960, and rose to the rank of Petty Officer. Although he loved the live, he had got married in 1958 and he found the long separations a bit too much to bear so he left the Navy and went to work at Courtaulds. It was at the factory in 1974 that he suffered a heart attack and died. He was only fifty four years of age. He left a son and daughter, and was sadly missed by many in the town where he was so well liked.

RICHMOND, William John

Enlisted in the 12th Battalion, Royal Irish Rifles (No.469), at Belfast on the 28 September 1914 and according to one source claimed to be a 19-year-old carpenter. The discovery of his real age, which meant he was underage for military service, caused him to be discharged under the terms of King's Regulations. This happened on the 28 October 1914.

Richmond was, however, determined to be a soldier and subsequently enlisted in the North Irish Horse in November 1915 and was later sent to France as reinforcement for the 1st North Irish Horse Regiment. His medal index card at National Archives, London records him as Richmond, 1885 William J, North Irish Horse and as 71616 of the Corps of Hussars. The Ballymena Observer, 19 November 1915 notes his enlistment in its section 'Ballymena and District Men with the Colours'.

North Irish Horse was initially attached to GHQ until 4 January 1916, and then transferred to 55th (West Lancashire) Division. On 10 May 1916, it was attached to VII Corps, forming along with D and E Squadrons the 1st North Irish Horse. 1 North Irish Horse was transferred to XIX Corps in July 1917, and then to V Corps, September 1917.

In March 1918, it became the 5th (North Irish Horse) Cyclist Battalion and remained so until the end of the war. Almost immediately the regiment became part of the "Great Retreat of 1918" during the initial phase of the German Spring Offensive, but it was part of the later advance, the Hundred Days, and at the Armistice the regiment was located close to Le Cateau, close to where it began its the war.

The "Horse", as it was and is affectionately known, won an impressive eighteen battle honours. Captain Richard West was awarded the Victoria Cross, Distinguished Service Order and Bar, and Military Cross, a remarkable achievement that itself points to the importance of the unit.

Private Richmond was transferred to the Army Reserve on 2 March 1919. He died on 18/03/1965.

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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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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