



remembrance ni



Barossa Day in WW2

“Bejabers
Buoys I have
the cuckoo”
cried Sgt
Masterson of
the 2/87th
Foot, as he
captured the
French 8th
Regiment’s
Eagle on 5th
March 1811 at
the Battle of
Barossa.



A French Regiment's Eagle was personally presented by Napoleon and this was the first to be captured by a British Regiment.

Masterson's regiment, the 87th Foot, were known in the Peninsular for their battle cry "Faugh a Ballagh", the Irish for "Clear the way". They also captured the French Regiments Officers' mess wagons full of fine wines, cognac and other delicacies. You can guess what happened to the contents of the wagons...disposed off with Irish style.

Following Barossa, the regiment was recommended to the Prince Regent who awarded them the title of Prince of Wales Own Irish Regiment and directed that they wear an eagle on their colours and appointments.

87th Foot lost 5 officers and 168 soldiers killed and wounded. From 1882 they were renamed The Royal Irish Fusiliers and are now amalgamated into The Royal Irish Regiment.

Barossa Day in WW2

Barrosa Day 1943, 1 RR Irish Fusiliers in Tunisia: “Many Faughs, including Brigadier N Russell MC, commander ‘Y’ Division & Lt-Col TPD Scott, commander Irish Brigade attended the ceremony of the Barrosa Cup at Bn HQ, a special cup being made for the purpose from the base of a 6 pounder shell.”

On 4th March 1944, Major Franklyn-Vaile, 1 R Irish Fusiliers, with the Irish Brigade in Italy noted in his dairy -

"Tomorrow is Barrosa Day, which will bring back some pleasant memories of the past few years. As we are fortunate enough to spend it out of the line, we are trying to make the best of conditions & it should not be too bad

1st Bn Royal Irish Fusiliers, Barrosa Day in Italy:

however...”

“...To visualise what happened in the Battalion, the memorable 5th March 1944, take the Braemar Gathering, a Varsity Rag and a football final at Wembley and a mock

battle on Salisbury Plain. Mix & stir well."

Brigadier Pat Scott addressing his command said -
"This day made me cast my mind back to the Barrosa Day of 1943.

"We were at Bou Arada then, in Tunisia. Nelson Russell was commanding 'Y' Division; I was commanding the Brigade and Beauchamp Butler, the Faughs.

"How few of that company were here today..."

Barrosa Day 38 (Irish) Brigade. At Forli 0930: A Brigade Church Service was conducted by C of I cleric, the Reverend Victor Pike OBE, Assistant Chaplain General, 8th Army.

The brigade then marched past a saluting base and the salute was taken by the Brigade Commander.

The ceremony was held to celebrate Barrosa Day - 05/03/1811 Battle of Barrosa. FAB.

On this Day – March 5

1933

The Nazis win the German general election with just 43.9 per cent of the popular vote. Despite failing to secure a majority, Hitler moves swiftly to transform the country into a

totalitarian dictatorship.

1940

Soviet NKVD chief Lavrentiy Beria proposed to execute all captive members of the Polish officer corps, they were considered enemies of the Soviet Union. Stalin approved this. Some 22,000 Polish prisoners would be executed in April and May 1940.

Italian collier ship seized by Allies.



1936

[Happy birthday to the Supermarine Spitfire. This day in 1936, prototype \(K5054\), a new all-metal monoplane fighter, took off on its first flight from Eastleigh Aerodrome.](#)

1941

The Royal Navy begins escorting British and Commonwealth troop convoys from Egypt to Greece.

1942

German reconnaissance planes locate the British convoy PQ-12 bound for Murmansk.

General Sir Harold Alexander arrives at Rangoon to take over command of Burma Army from Lieutenant General Hutton. Wavell had given Alexander orders to hold Rangoon at all costs. Immediately, orders were issued for the 1st Burma Division to counter-attack the Japanese from the north and 17th Indian Division which had been reinforced was to attack east of Pegu. Both attacks failed and Alexander realized that Rangoon could not be held. He ordered that Rangoon be evacuated and his troops withdraw north to the Irrawaddy Valley to regroup.

1943

Bomber Command reports the 'first effective attack on Essen' due primarily to the use of a new navigational aid 'Oboe'. The 'Battle of the Ruhr' begins

1944

Koniev's 2nd Ukrainian Front launches an attack towards Uman.

Gliders and air-transport-borne 'Chindits' set up 'Broadway' a stronghold behind Japanese lines, North East of Indaw.

1945

Barrosa Day 38 (Irish) Brigade. See article above

1946

Winston Churchill's "Iron Curtain" speech in Fulton, Missouri, popularises the term and draws attention to the division of Europe

Roll of Honour – March 5

Representing their comrades who died on this day

1915

+KEENAN, Patrick Joseph

Royal Irish Rifles, 1st Btn. F Coy. Lance Corporal. 9871.
Died 05/03/1915. Age 21. Born Fermoy, Co. Cork. Son of Mr. W. and Mrs. K. M. Keenan, of 4, Sussex Place, Belfast.
Royal Irish Rifles Graveyard, Laventie, France

+YOUNG, James

4th Dragoon Guards (Royal Irish), B Sqdn. Private. 3376.
Died 05/03/1915. Age 25. Son of John Young, of 65,

Westbourne St., Belfast, and the late Elizabeth Young.
Ypres (Menin Gate) Memorial, Belgium

1916

+LOGAN, John

Connaught Rangers, 6th Btn. Private. 2314. Died
05/03/1916. Age 39. Son of the late John and Matilda
Logan, of Ill, Hardinge St., Belfast. Loos Memorial, France

1917

+HOUSTON, John

Royal Irish Rifles, 10th Btn. Rifleman. 20/5. Died
05/03/1917. Age 21. Son of John and Mary Houston, of
Bovennett, Loughbrickland, Banbridge. St Quentin Cabaret
Military Cemetery, Belgium

+McLAUGHLIN, William

1st South African Mounted Brigade. Private 7072. Died
05/03/1917 of cerebral-malarial fever. Age 23. Born on
14/08/1893 in Church Street, Newtownards. Only son of
Daniel and Catherine (Kate) McLaughlin (nee Hendron) who
were married on 15/01/1883 in Newtownards Roman
Catholic Church. William was ten when his mother, Kate
McLaughlin, died of cancer on 13/06/1904 (aged 50); she
had been ill for three years. Daniel McLaughlin and his
family moved to 5 Balfour Street, Newtownards. William
McLaughlin moved to South Africa. Thaba Tshwane (Old
No.1) Military Cemetery. Newtownards and District WM (as
William McLoughlin).

+RUSSELL, Samuel John

Royal Engineers. 222nd Field CoY. Sapper. 143369. Died 05/03/1917. Age 22. Born on 03/09/1894 in the townland of Rahanna, Ardee, Co Louth. Son of Isaac and Annie Russell (nee Briggs) who were married on 18/12/1890 in Kilkeel Church of Ireland Parish Church, Co Down. Isaac Russell worked as a gardener and in 1911 the Russell family was living at 31 Church View, Hollywood. Samuel John Russell had two younger sisters. Prior to the outbreak of the war Samuel Russell worked as a gardener for William Miller in Hollywood. He was a member of 1st Hollywood Boy Scouts for more than eight years and became Assistant Scoutmaster. He enlisted in Belfast. After his death in a letter to Sam's father, his Captain said that Sam 'had distinguished himself on the field three weeks before he met his death'. Hem Farm Military Cemetery, France. Hollywood and District WM. Hollywood Church of Ireland Parish Church (St Philip & St James)

1918

+ALLEN, D

Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, 7th/8th Btn. Private. 22018. Died 05/03/1918. Age 20 years old. Son of Joseph and Mary Allen, of 4, Strand Terrace, Coleraine, Co. Derry. Born at Glasgow. Villers-Faucon Communal Cemetery Extension, France

+DUNCAN, James

Royal Irish Rifles. 6th Btn. Rifleman. 4/7580. Died 05/03/1918. Age 21. Son of John and Susan Duncan, of 3,

Broadbent St., Belfast. Jerusalem War Cemetery, Israel and Palestine (including Gaza)

+McCONNELL, Robert

Royal Irish Rifles, Depot Btn. Rifleman. 2313. Died 05/03/1918. Age 20. Born 26/02/1898 in Herdstown, Donaghadee. Son of David and Mary Ellen (nee Strain) McConnell. He was the fifth of their eleven children. They moved to Portavo and then to Bangor where Robert attended Bangor Grammar School. On the outbreak of war Robert, his father David and brother David junior enlisted. His father's records state he had previous service in the Royal Garrison Artillery. Tragedy soon followed for in October Mary Ellen died of ovarian cancer. The Newtownards Chronicle of 23/10/1914 reported, "... Deceased was the wife of David M'Connell, one of the Bangor U.V.F. at present in camp at Clandeboye. The case is a peculiarly sad one, as deceased leaves a family of ten children, six of whom are totally unfit to provide for themselves. Mrs. M'Connell has been ailing for several weeks, and it is much to be feared that a woman in humble circumstances could not, with the delay in the Government remittances, have received nourishment requisite to her delicate condition. Mr. M'Connell is well-known in Bangor having, before he enlisted, been in the employment of Mr. Hugh Morrow as driver of a dust cart for the Urban Council." His father was discharged in November to look after his young family. His brother David died at the Somme on 01/07/1916. In September 1917 his father David re-enlisted with the Royal Garrison Artillery. He was later transferred to the Labour Corps and then to the Durham Light Infantry in June 1918, demobilised in February 1919 and finally discharged in March 1920. Robert became ill and developed

pulmonary tuberculosis and was discharged from the army in April 1917, going to live in the family home in Church Street. On 05/03/1918 Robert McConnell died in Forster Green Hospital of pulmonary haemorrhage. Bangor Cemetery. Robert and his brother David are named on St Comgall's Parish Church Bangor WM

+MURRAY, Robert John

Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, 7th/8th Btn. Private. 29586. Died 05/03/1918. Aged 20. Son of John and Mary Murray. Robert was born in Fedden, Ballygawley, Co Tyrone about 1898. John Murray worked as a farm labourer. Villers-Faucon Communal Cemetery Extension, Somme, France.
Ballygawley War Dead Book

+RYAN, George

Canadian Infantry. 43rd Btn. Private. 722104. Died 05/03/1918. Age 35. Born 20/12/1882. Emigrated. Enlisted in March 1916 in the Canadian Expeditionary Force. At the beginning of March 1918 his battalion was in the Vimy Ridge area. He was injured in the arm and leg by an enemy shell. He was moved to a casualty clearing centre where he died from his wounds. Son of Mr. and Mrs. George Ryan, of Co. Armagh; husband to Margaret Ryan, of 60, Whittier Avenue, Transcona, Manitoba. Barlin Communal Cemetery Extension, France

+TOAL, D

Royal Garrison Artillery, 103rd Coy. Gunner. 187720. Died 05/03/1918. Age 38. Son of Daniel and Jane Toal, of Belfast. Alexandria (Chatby) Military and War Memorial Cemetery,

Egypt

1919

+GREER, J

Royal Irish Fusiliers. 3rd (Garr.) Bn. transf. to (390371)
156th Coy. Private. G/26349. Died 05/03/1919. Aged 42.
Son of John and Martha Greer, of Banbridge; husband to I.
P. Greer, of 22, Colchester St., Belfast. Blargies Communal
Cemetery extension. Oise, France

1943

+BANKS, George Edmund

Royal Artillery. 9 Coast Regt. Gunner. 853226. Died
05/03/1943. Aged 27. Singapore Memorial, Singapore.
Dollingstown WM

+COLEMAN, Robin Benjamin Bunch

Royal Artillery. Lieutenant. 87490. Died 05/03/1943 while he
was a prisoner of war in Asia. Aged 33. Ballymena Academy
and Campbell College where he was a member of the CCF.
Formerly in 9 HAA Regt, Robin had been promoted and was
serving with another Gunner regiment at the time of his
death. Son of James and Doris Coleman, of Greystone,
Galgorm Road, Ballymena. Singapore Memorial, Singapore.
Derry Cathedral WM. West Presbyterian Church, Ballymena
RH

+LUFF, Edmund

RAF. Flying Officer. 47914. Died 05/03/1943. Aged 26.156 Sqdn. Son of William George and Gertrude Isabel Luff, Belfast. Rheinberg War Cemetery, Germany

+McKEE, Percy Alexander

Australian New Guinea Administrative Unit, A.C.M.F. H.Q. Corporal. NG2437. Died 05/03/1943. Age 33. Son of James and Frances Maria McKee, of Newtown Stewart, Co. Tyrone. Port Moresby (Bomana) War Cemetery, Papua New Guinea

1945

+BROWN, Arthur

Irish Guards, 3rd Btn. Guardsman. 2724382. Died 05/03/1945 of wounds. Age 18. Arthur had four brothers also serving. A cousin became a prisoner of war at Dunkirk and another died while serving in Italy. He was the son of David Brown and Ellen Brown of 255 Matilda Street, Belfast. Mook War Cemetery, Limburg, Netherlands

+DEVINE, Robert James

Irish Guards, 3rd Btn. Guardsman. 2724791. Died 05/03/1945. Age 24. Son of Samuel Devine and Martha Devine of Londonderry. Reichswald Forest War Cemetery, Noerdrhein-Westfalen, Germany

+KERR, Holman Gordon Stanley

Flying Officer 185226. Died 05/03/1945. Age 23. 514 Sqdn., Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve. Son of Thomas John

and Evelyn Margaret Kerr, of Lurgan. 514 Squadron was involved in air support for the advancing allied armies during the last months of the war. It was in the course of such action that F.O.Kerr died.

Gordon was educated at Lurgan College from 03/09/1934 until 31/07/1940. Soon after leaving school, he joined the Belfast Banking Company and worked in Rathfriland branch.

Stationed at RAF Waterbeach, Cambridge, England, on the night of 05/03/1945, the crew flew Lancaster bomber aircraft (I NN775 JI-F2) on an operation to Geisenkirchen targeting a Benzol Plant.

While flying near Tirlemont, the aircraft suddenly went into a dive from which the pilot was unable to recover. The plane crashed at Bunsbeek, Belgium and all seven crew were killed. Three bodies were recovered and placed in a communal grave with seven headstones in Heverlee War Cemetery. Gordon was not one of them. The others, including Gordon remained buried with the wreckage of the plane.

A memorial ceremony was held at the crash site on Remembrance Sunday, 11/11/2015 with officials attending from Germany, UK, Australia and the Belgian Air Force.

Also, the Mayor of Bunsbeek, Belgium together with the British, Australian and German Ambassadors attended a Remembrance service to commemorate the crew from 3 aircraft (A Wellington, a Junkers 88 and Lancaster NN775) that crashed near the village.

Gordon and his crew were honoured again in a service of commemoration on Friday 28/04/2017 at Heverlee War Cemetery, Vlaams-Brabant, Belgium. The service, organised by the MOD's Joint Casualty and Compassionate Centre (JCCC), part of Defence Business Services was conducted by the Reverend (Wing Commander) Ashley Mitchell RAF and supported by RAF Defence Staff based in Belgium. The ceremony was attended by British and Australian Defence Staff, 514 Squadron representatives and local dignitaries.

Beverley Simon, JCCC said: "It has been a tremendous privilege for the JCCC to have organised this service of commemoration for the 7 crew members of Lancaster NN775 and to ensure that the appropriate level of dignity, ceremony and respect has been afforded.

"We are especially delighted that so many of the crew's families were able to attend the service, some from as far afield as the USA."

Heverlee War Cemetery. Lurgan WM

VETERANS

BAXTER, Robert Bradshaw BEM.

Robert was born in the Broadway area of Belfast on 28/7/1920.

He joined up on 19/07/1940 and was eventually posted to H Company 2nd London Irish Rifles . He landed in Algiers 22/11/1942.



The first major battle that he took part in was the Battle of Bou Arada on 20/01/1943 during which the 2nd LIR drove the enemy off Hill 286 and held it against several fierce counterattacks but at great cost.

Brigadier Nelson Russell DSO MC described it as “the bloodiest single day battle of the Tunisian campaign.”

After the North African campaign was over he moved to Italy via the campaign in Sicily. While in Italy he took part in an attack by the 78th Division as part of the Monte Cassino campaign. At 0900 on the 16/05/1944 H Company led by Major Desmond Woods MC attacked a village called Sinagoga in the Liri Valley. The Company attacked under very heavy fire and after a fierce fight, some of it hand to

hand, the village was taken. The CO recalls that he finished the battle with about only a dozen men uninjured .

During his service in Italy Bobby was Mentioned in Despatches for Gallant and Distinguished Service. He served the rest of his active service in Italy and Austria. After his Active and Reserve Service ended on 12/09/1948 he joined the 6th Battalion Royal Ulster Rifles (TA) where he served until his retirement on age grounds in November 1967.

He had obtained the rank of Sergeant Major. He had been awarded the BEM in 1962. He served in total 27 years with the Colours. He passed on 05/03/1995.

BLACK, Herbert James

Herbert was a dispatch rider in the Army in World War One. His parents, Mr. H.A.G. and Mrs. Black, lived in Portrush, and he lived at Main Street, Portstewart. He was living in Bangor when he died on 5 March 1966, aged 75 years. Northern Constitution 11/12/1915.

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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