



remembrance ni



Commonwealth War Graves at Cassino

Ulster ferries role in Dunkirk evacuation

Operation Dynamo, also known as the Miracle of Dunkirk, was the evacuation of Allied soldiers during

World War II from the beaches and harbour of Dunkirk, in the north of France, between 26 May and 4 June 1940.

The Belfast - Liverpool ferries "Ulster Prince", "Ulster Monarch" and "Princess Maud" took part in Operation Dynamo where the 3rd (Ulster) Anti-Aircraft Brigade, 1st Battalion Royal Irish Fusiliers, 2nd Battalion Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers and 2nd Battalion Royal Ulster Rifles were among the various units comprising the British Expeditionary Force who were rescued.

The trio provided a reliable and regular overnight service between Belfast and Liverpool. They were pioneer diesel-propelled cross-channel passenger ships.

"Ulster Prince" was the last of three 3,700 ton motorships built by Harland and Wolff for the Belfast Steamship Co. between 1929 and 1930.

"Ulster Prince" served as troop ship and as an Anti-Aircraft Ship to protect convoys."

"Ulster Monarch" was used by the Royal Navy as a Fighter direction ship to vector Night-Fight Beaufighter aircraft onto enemy convoys in the Mediterranean Sea. She was used to ferry Royal Marine Commandoes to invade Sicily. In April 1941, during the evacuation of Greece, she ran aground off Nafplio, Greece. The following day, she was bombed and became a total loss.

"Ulster Queen" was also requisitioned by the Admiralty. She never returned to civilian service. *Ulster Queen* ran aground

off Maughold Head on the Isle of Man on 28/02/1940. She was refloated on 27 March and taken to Belfast for repairs. She was substantially as modified as an auxiliary anti-aircraft cruiser. Her boat deck and one funnel were removed and armour plating was added to the hull. She was armed with six 4.0in guns and smaller AA weapons. Renamed HMS *Ulster Queen*, she was purchased outright by the Admiralty and served with the Russian convoys, in the Mediterranean and in the Far East before being paid off on 01/04/1946. The modifications were too substantial for her to return to passenger service. She was laid up, and eventually scrapped in 1950.

On this Day – May 25

1914

British House of Commons passes the Irish Home Rule Bill

1915

2nd Battle of Ypres

Battle of Bellewaarde 24th/25th May 1915

At 0245 on the morning of the 24th May the Germans released Chlorine and Mustard gas across a 4.5 mile front before the attack, at Mouse Trap Farm, and Shell Trap Farm

1st Royal Irish Fusiliers, 2nd Royal Dublin Fusiliers, 2nd Royal Irish Regiment were involved. Between gas, shell fire, and machine gun, the attack got held up with disastrous

consequences especially for the (Dubs). At the end of the day they had 1 Officer and 21 other ranks left out of a total 658 officers and men. They were basically annihilated.

Many others were to suffer terrible injuries from gas for years afterward and eventually dying from the effects, Also to loose his life that day was Private John Condon 6322 Royal Irish Regiment aged 14 buried in Poelcapelle British Cemetery. One of the most visited cemeteries on the Western Front.

1916

At the Battle of Verdun the Germans attack between the Haudromont Wood and Thiaumont Farm.

1939

Full control of the Fleet Air Arm, which had been in Royal Air Force hands since 1918, was officially restored to the Admiralty. It would be known as the Air Branch of the Royal Navy for a period. The first Flag Officer Home Air Command was Rear Admiral Richard Bell Davies VC CB DSO AFC, a celebrated Royal Naval Air Service WWI pilot.

1940

The Germans take Boulogne, France. The bulk of 20 Guards Brigade were evacuated from Boulogne by the Royal Navy after two days of hard fighting. Pockets of British and French troops would carry on fighting and would either die or be captured with Boulogne finally falling on the 25th May. 1940

The British Expeditionary Force is ordered to retreat to Dunkirk.

The British garrison of Calais rejects a German call for surrender.

15 French generals are relieved of their commands.

Trade Union executives accept Nye Bevan's manpower mobilization plan, setting up Labour Supply Board and Production Council.

1941

Bismarck escapes the Royal Navy's pursuit and separates from the Prinz Eugen and makes her way towards Brest.

German Navy Chief, Admiral Raeder warns that US convoying of British war supplies would be considered an act of war.

The Germans decide to go on the offensive having now received substantial reinforcement through Maleme airfield on Crete.

1942

RAF Coastal Command refuses permission for their aircraft to take part in operation 'Millennium', which means that a shortfall of 250 aircraft is expected. However, by scraping up all the resources within Bomber Command, he manages to find the required 1000 bombers.

Perth police arrest four Australians for planning to set up an 'Australia First' Nazi-style government.

1944

US VI Corps from Anzio joins US II Corps from Gustav Line near Littoria, Italy, tackling Cisterna in the process.

German paratroopers attack Tito's Partisan HQ at Drvar in Bosnia on Tito's 52nd birthday. Tito and Churchill's son Randolph, both manage to escape in to the mountains.

1945

38(Irish)Brigade -TREFFEN/VILLACH:

H Coy 2 LIR move to Bodensdorf on the northern shore of the Ossiach See. The area was still congested with Hungarians & civilian refugees.

2 Innisks to be at 4 hrs notice to move to Hermagor. Task to assist in handing Cossacks over to the Russians.

The U.S. Joint Chiefs complete the plan for Operation 'Olympic', which sets the date to invade the Japanese mainland as no later than the 1st November 1945.

The last major US B-29 fire raid on Tokyo. In the campaign, 50% of city has been burned. Imperial Palace is hit in the B-29 raid, and Emperor Hirohito and his family are nearly killed.

1948

Witold Pilecki was executed in Warsaw. A Polish soldier in 1920 and 1939 wars, volunteer prisoner of the German Auschwitz camp, co-founder of camp resistance. He escaped in April 1943 and wrote a report about the crimes in the camp.

After his escape Pilecki participated in the Warsaw Uprising, he was a POW at Lamsdorf and Murnau camps. After the war he served in the Polish II Corps of Gen. Władysław Anders in Italy. During the communist terror in Poland sentenced to death and murdered on 25 May 1948.

Roll of Honour – May 25

Representing their comrades who died on this day

1915

+BAGLEY, Edward

19th (Queen Alexandra's Own Royal) Hussars. B Sqdn. Private. 5170. Died 24/05/1915, Aged 33. Husband to Martha Bagley, Hibert St., Holywood, Co. Down. Ypres (Menin Gate) Memorial, West-Vlaanderen, Belgium

+COOKE, Charles Ernest

Royal Irish Fusiliers, 3rd Btn. Second Lieutenant. Died 25/05/1915. Age 30. Son of Alexander and E. J. Cooke, of Nottinghill House, Belfast. Ypres (Menin Gate) Memorial, Belgium

+TITTERINGTON, Robert

Royal Irish Fusiliers. 1st Btn. (Machine gun section). Serjeant. 9914. Wounded 24th/25th May 1915. Died 25/05/1915 in 10th Field Ambulance, Vlamertinghe. Age 30. Enlisted in Armagh 1914. Went to France with British Expeditionary Force 18/08/1914. Born in Tandragee. Orphan and lived with his brother and 2 sisters with Robert and Mary Jones, Terryhoogan, Scarva, Co Down. Hop Store Cemetery, West-Valaanderen, Belgium. Gilford WM

+HURST, Thomas Joseph

Royal Irish Fusiliers. 1st Btn. C Coy. Private. 11504. Died of wounds (Gas and Shelling) at 10th Field Ambulance at Vlamertinghe 25/05/1915. Age 18. Born 1897 youngest son of Thomas and Emily Hurst, of 22, Claytown, Lurgan, Co. Armagh. Hop Store Cemetery, West-Valaanderen, Belgium. Lurgan WM

+O'FARRELL, John

Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, 2nd Btn. Private. 4418. Died 25/05/1915. Age 18. Son of John and Mary O'Farrell, of Gortgonis, Coalisland. Le Touquet-Paris Plage Communal Cemetery, France. Dungannon WM

+SAVAGE, Thomas

Royal Field Artillery. 133rd Bty. Driver. 77174. Died 25/05/1915. Age 22. Disembarked in France 22/12/1914. Son of the late Mr. and Mrs. Henry Savage. He left his effects to his stepsister Annie Kelly and his uncle, Patrick Finnegan from Bessbrook. Ypres (Menin Gate) Memorial, Belgium

+SPARROW, Henry Ambrose

Cheshire Regiment, 1st Btn. Serjeant. 8746. Died 25/05/1915. Age 27. Son of John Ambrose Sparrow and Sarah Ann Sparrow, of Birkenhead; husband to Mary Holt (formerly Sparrow), of 8, Kensington St., Belfast. Tuileries British Cemetery, Belgium

+TEMPLETON, Ernest Churchill

Canadian Infantry, 5th Btn. Private. 21666. Died 25/05/1915. Age 27. Born on 08/08/1890. Ernest Templeton attended the Royal School Dungannon between 1906 and 1908. He continued his studies at Methodist College Belfast. Ernest Templeton emigrated to Canada. He was living in Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan and working as a bank clerk in the local branch of the Canadian Bank of Commerce before enlisting. On 13/09/1914, Ernest Templeton enlisted with the 5th Btn of the Canadian Infantry He was a bomb instructor with his battalion. He was killed in an accident when a bomb burst in his hands Son of the Rev. James Bradley Templeton and Annie Kathleen Templeton, of Clones, Ireland. James Bradley Templeton was a Methodist minister. Bruary Communal Cemetery Extension, France. Royal School Dungannon Book

+TITTERINGTON, Robert

Royal Irish Fusiliers. 1st Btn. (Machine gun section). Serjeant. 9914. Wounded 24th/25th May 1915. Died 25/05/1915 in 10th Field Ambulance, Vlamertinghe. Age 30. Enlisted in Armagh 1914. Went to France with British Expeditionary Force 18/08/1914. Born in Tandragee. One of four orphaned children who lived with Robert and Mary

Jones, Terryhoogan, Scarva, Co Down. Hop Store Cemetery, West-Valaanderen, Belgium. Gilford WM

1916

+BELL, Hugh Ernest

RNR. Trimmer. 2351/ST. HMS Redoubtable. Died 25/05/1916. Aged 42. Son of John and Catherine Bell, Belfast; husband to Jessie Bell, Ardilaun St., Belfast. Haslar Royal Naval Cemetery

+COOKE, John Thomas

Royal Naval Reserve. Stoker. 2715T. HMS Pembroke serving in in HMS Indus. Died 25/05/1916. Age 32. Born Cookstown on 10/07/1883. Stated next of kin was his sister Margaret, 32 Paxton Road, Stockton-on Tees. Ford Park Cemetery, Plymouth old cemetery. Cookstown WM

+DALY, H

Royal Irish Fusiliers, 8th Btn. Private. 20198. Died 25/05/1916. Brother of Miss M. A. Daly, of 33, Cavendish St., Belfast. St Patrick's Cemetery, Loos, France

1917

+CONNELL, Dennis

Royal Navy. Stoker 1st Class. K/32150(PO). H.M.S. Superb. Died 25/05/1917. Born Cullyhanna, County Armagh. By 1911 the family were living at Cockermouth and in 1914 in Govan. His brother Patrick fell with the Durham Light Infantry 27/08/1918. Son of Patrick and Mary Connell. Lyness RN Cemetery

+TRIMBLE, William

RN. Assistant Storekeeper. 723122. HMS Hilary. Died 25/05/1917. Age 28. Ship torpedoed by German submarine U-88. His brother John fell on 24/10/1914. Son of Robert George and Catherine Trimble, 3 Lonsdale St., Armagh. Plymouth Naval Memorial, Panel 26

1919

+WALSH, Robert

Leinster Regiment, 1st Btn. Private. 27795. Died 25/05/1919. Age 26. Son of John and Eliza Walsh, of 17, Saul St., Belfast. Cairo War Memorial Cemetery, Egypt

1940

+EATON, Westley

Royal Artillery. 8th HAA Regt. 23 Bty. Gunner. 1459542. Died Between 23/05/1940 and 25/05/1940. Aged 21. Son of James and Margaret Eaton, of Belfast. Boulogne Eastern Cemetery, Pas de Calais, France. Regimental RH, St Anne's Cathedral, Belfast

+GORDON, James Hamilton

RAF. Pilot Officer (Air Gunner). 43157. Died 25/05/1940. Aged 30. 15 Sqdn. On 25/05/1940 his aircraft, a Blenheim Mark IV P6913 with three crew set off from Wyton as part of a 24 aircraft daytime sortie to seek out targets in the Rety-Fiennes-Guines triangle. He was detailed to bomb troops, vehicles and vital bridges just behind the German front line, which was closing in on the main body of the British

Expeditionary Force. His aircraft was shot down near St. Inglevert, on the main road to Calais between Boulogne-sur-Mer and Marquise, with the loss of all of the three crew. From Cookstown, he was the son of James and Matilda Gordon and husband to Virtue O. Gordon of Holywood, County Down. St. Inglevert Churchyard, Pas de Calais, France. Holywood WM, Stewartstown WM, Stewartstown Church of Ireland RH 1944

+HOUSTON, Stewart

Irish Guards, 2nd Btn. Serjeant. 2718618. Died Between 23/05/1940 and 04/06/1940, killed in action at Outreau, Boulogne-Sur-Mer. Aged 21. Outreau Communal Cemetery, Pas de Calais, France

+HYNDMAN, George Blackwood

RAFVR. Flight Sergeant (Pilot). 1494571. Died 25/05/1944. Aged 24. 51 Sqdn. Son of James and Mary J. Hyndman, of Londonderry. Rheinberg War Cemetery. Nordrhein-Westfalen, Germany

+McCONNELL, Reginald Hardy

Royal Irish Fusiliers, 1st Btn. Fusilier. 6978362. Died between 25/05/1940 and 27/05/1940. Age 20. Son of John J. McConnell and Annie McConnell, of Shantallow, Co. Londonderry. Fleurbaix Communal Cemetery. France

+STEVENSON, John James

Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, 2nd Btn. Fusilier. 6977319. Died Between 25/05/1940 and 26/05/1940. Aged 25. Son of Hugh

and Matilda Jane Stevenson, of Culmore, Co. Londonderry.
Esquelmes War Cemetery, Hainaut, Belgium

1941

+LEAKER, William Arthur

York and Lancaster Regiment, 2nd Btn. Lance Corporal.
4750529. Died 25/05/1941. Aged 23. Son of Alban St. Clair
Leaker and Mary Ann Leaker; husband of Sarah Elizabeth
Gamble Leaker, of Portstewart. Athens Memorial, Greece

1944

+HASLETT, Stewart

RAFVR. Sergeant. 2201240. Died 25/05/1944. Age 20.101
Sqn. Son of Stewart and Minnie Haslett, Belfast.
Rheinberg War Cemetery, Germany

+HARPUR, William

RAFVR. Sergeant. 1796407. Died 25/05/1944. Aged 21.
Son of John Blair Harpur and Annie Harpur of Strabane.
Strabane Cemetery

+HYNDMAN, George Blackwood

RAFVR. Flight Sergeant (Pilot).1494571. Died 25/05/1944.
Aged 24. 51 Sqn. QUB. Son of James and Mary J.
Hyndman, of Londonderry. Rheinberg War Cemetery.
Nordrhein-Westfalen, Germany. Carlisle Rd., Presbyterian
Church RH, Londonderry. QUB WM

+MARTIN, Thomas Warnock

Pioneer Corps. Private. 13014671. Died 25/05/1944. Aged 47. Thomas Martin served in both World Wars and was a prisoner of war in both. He had served at the Battle of the Somme with the Royal Irish Rifles and later was taken prisoner. He rejoined the army in 1940 and in May that year was captured at Boulogne, France. During his time as a prisoner in the first world war, he had learned to speak German. He acted as an interpreter in the prisoner of war camp in Germany during the second world war. While a prisoner of war in WW2, Martin contracted tuberculosis. On his return to Northern Ireland in October 1943, he spent several months in hospital. He died at 48 Kimberley Street, Belfast. Son of Alexander and Jane Martin; husband of Mary Martin, of Kimberley Street, Belfast. Belfast City Cemetery, Glenalina Extension

+SHIELDS James

RAFVR. Sergeant /Air Gunner 1795770, 192 Sqdn. Died 25/05/1944. Aged 21. Son of Alexander (Sandy) and Bridget (Bridie) Shields (nee Flanagan, sometimes Flannigan) of Cullintra, Comber. Alexander Shields worked as a labourer and he and Bridie Flanagan were married on 29/11/1916 in Ballymacarrett Church of Ireland Church (St. Patrick's), Belfast. Sandy and Bridie Shields (nee Flanagan) had at least six children

During the Second World War, Alec Shields a brother of James served in the Royal Air Force as a Flight Mechanic. James Shields was educated at Ballydrain Public Elementary School and after leaving school he worked for Messrs Short and Harland in Belfast.

In 1942 James Shields joined the Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve and he was reported missing in May 1944. He was one of a crew of nine aboard a Handley Page Halifax Mark III aircraft (MZ501) which flew out of RAF Foulsham in Norfolk and crashed at 11.44 pm in Limburg, Netherlands. Only Flying Officer D.B. Gaunt survived the crash and he was taken Prisoner-of-War. Sergeant James Shields (aged 21) was killed and seven other men died that night. They were all buried south of Limburg at Sint-Truiden (St. Tront) where there was a major Luftwaffe air base and later reinterred in Heverlee War Cemetery. His father Sandy died on 11/09/1965; his brother Alec died on 18/05/1987 and his mother Bridie died on 20/10/1989. Heverlee War Cemetery. Comber and District WM. Second Comber Presbyterian Church RH.

VETERANS

CRAIG, Henry

Henry Ernest Craig was born on 14/05/1884 at 10 Parkview Terrace, Belfast, the second of two children of Inland Revenue officer Henry Craig and his wife Elizabeth. His mother died when he was just four years old and three years later his father re-married, to clergyman's daughter Jane Mateer. Henry was educated at Campbell College, Belfast. By 1911 he was living at 18 Fitzroy Avenue, Belfast, and working as a clerical official with the Belfast Harbour Commission.

Henry enlisted in the North Irish Horse at Belfast on 01/10/1914 (No.1229 – later Corps of Hussars 71291), understating his age by three years. He was promoted to corporal a month later. On 02/06/1916 he embarked for

France with a small party of reinforcements. There he was posted to C Squadron. While at Rouen waiting to join his squadron he was severely reprimanded for insolence to a senior NCO.

On 20/01/1917 he was promoted to lance sergeant and on 4 March to sergeant.

Craig applied for a commission in the cavalry on 28/04/1917. He left France for the UK, reporting for duty at the No.1 Cavalry Cadet School at Netheravon on 1 September. On 23/02/1918 he was commissioned as a 2nd lieutenant and posted to the 2nd Reserve Regiment of Cavalry.

Later that year he returned to France, where he was posted to the 3rd (King's Own) Hussars, joining it in November. He remained at the regiment's base depot until the following year, when he returned to the UK. He was demobilised on 11/05/1919 and relinquished his commission on 01/09/1921.

After the war, Craig returned to work at the Belfast Harbour Commission. He died at his home at 8 Sixth Avenue, Baylands, Bangor, on 25/05/1945.

The following obituary appeared in the Northern Whig and Belfast Post: "Mr. Harry E. Craig ... had been an official of the Belfast Harbour Board from the age of 16 until his retirement about a year ago. An ex-Serviceman of the 1914-18 war, in which he served with the North Irish Horse, and, as a captain, with the 3rd Hussars, he afterwards became a sub-district commander in the "B" Special Constabulary, Antrim Road District, and during the present War held the rank of lieutenant in the Bangor Home Guard. He was a prominent member of the Masonic Order, a

director and secretary of Dunmore Badminton Hall, and a member of Bangor Golf Club.”

SPILLER, Edwin Fredelle

Edwin Spiller was born at Marlborough Park, Belfast on 3rd March 1889 to Daniel Frederick Spiller, Solicitor and Alice Spiller nee Hall. They married on 6th March 1879 at St. Anne's Parish Church, Belfast.

In 1901 Spiller (12) was living in house 84, Lisburn Road, Windsor, Belfast with his parents and 2 siblings; Alys (Alice in 1911) May (17) and Robert Frederick (13). Two servants were also present in the house; Margaret Black (25) and Letitia Dugan (26).

By 1911 the house number changes to 86 from 84. His parents and siblings, Alice and Robert are living with 2 servants; Sarah Wilkinson (56) and Sarah Jamison (33).

Following his education at Methodist College, Belfast, Spiller joined the Belfast Banking Company on 16th January 1907. His father signed the Bankers Guarantee giving his address as 4 West Elmwood Road, Belfast. Later on, his mother and sister were added with their address recorded as 4 Adelaide Park, Belfast.

By 1911, Spiller was boarding in house 14, Abercorn Place, Londonderry, Co. Londonderry. His occupation is detailed as a Bank Official.

In September 1914, Spiller volunteered and enlisted into the Black Watch (Royal Highlanders) and is recorded on his Medal Index Card as a Lieutenant. His Service Numbers

were 2176 (Royal Highlanders) and S/443681 (ASC - Army Service Corps).

His first theatre of war is recorded as Western Europe from 2nd May 1915. The Belfast Banking Company 'Roll of Honour' booklet records Edwin as having been 'previously wounded' with his last known address 'Belfast'.

A Pension Record card was created as a result of his injury which is recorded as a G S W Head (gun shot wound to the head).

Spiller was discharged from the army on 7th March 1919. He was awarded the 1915 Star, the British War Medal and the British Victory Medal.

Following demobilisation, Edwin returned to work in Portrush branch.

Spiller is reported by many golfing internet sites as being a golfer who won or was runner up in the annual Irish Amateur Open Championships. He was a member of the North West Golf Club who report that he represented Ireland as a Senior International from 1924 to 1929.

The Staff Magazine 'The Link (Winter 1984)' contains a photograph of Edwin in Londonderry branch in the 1930's.

The Belfast News-Letter of 13th June 1934 reported on the marriage of Edwin to Miss Janet (Jean) Henderson at Whiteabbey Presbyterian Church (6th June 1934).

In 1935, he is reported to be living at 'Rossclair', Ramore Avenue, Portrush with a son, Noel (Ashley) at Campbell College.

Edwin was an honorary member of Malone Golf Club. Retirement came on 1st July 1941 as manager of Portrush. Edwin Spiller died on 25th May 1980.

Courtesy commentary on Belfast Bank WM.

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

houstonmckelvey@mac.com

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

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

