



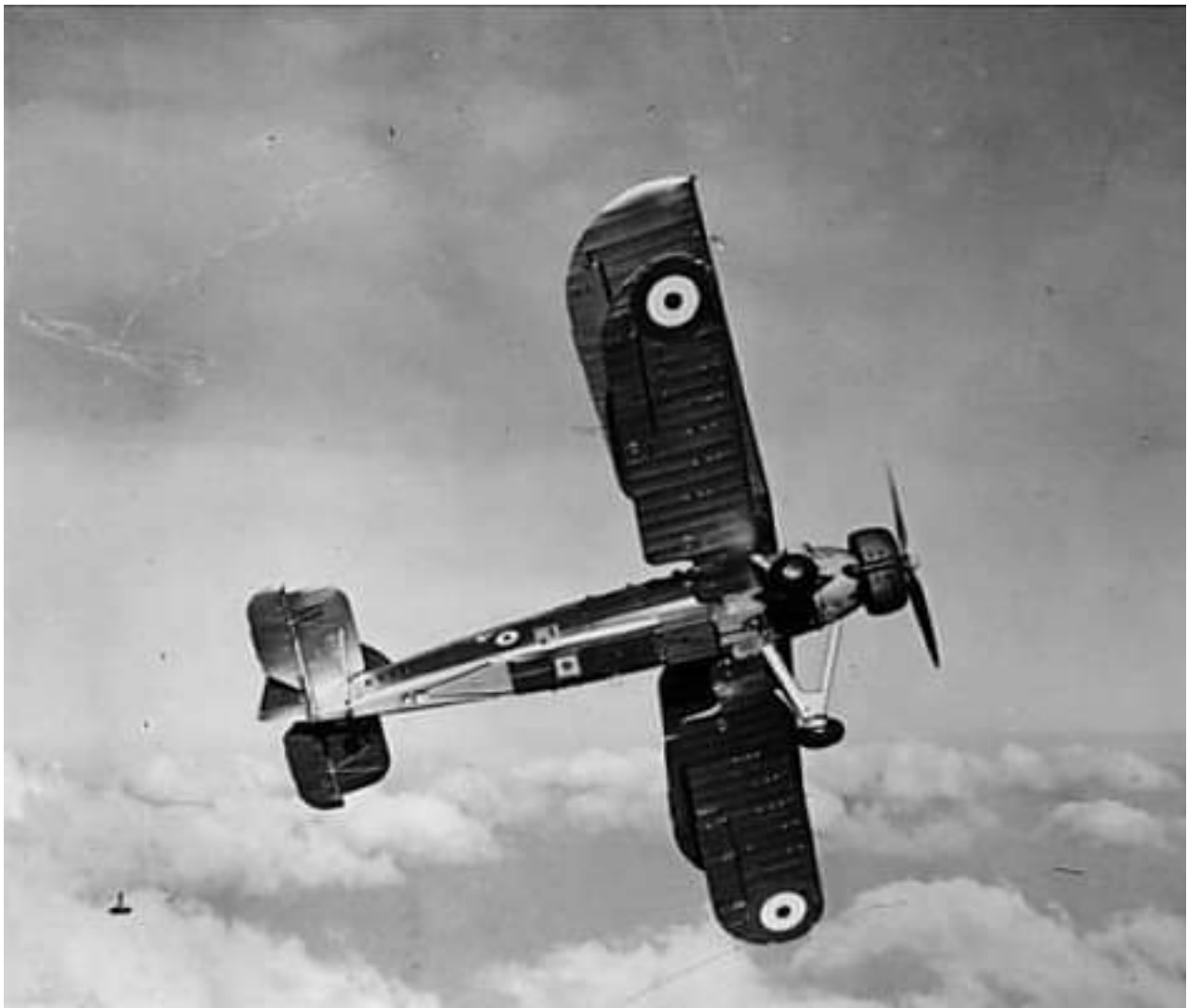
remembrance ni



**Operation Dynamo begins to
evacuate troops from Dunkirk,
26 May 1940**

On this day in 1940, more than 340,000 exhausted British and French soldiers waited at Dunkirk for some kind of miracle. It came in the form of Operation Dynamo.

Operation 'Dynamo' the evacuation of British, French and Belgian troops from Dunkirk begins. Under the command of Admiral Bertram Ramsay, hundreds of naval, commercial and private vessels participate in this most desperate rescue attempt. Calais falls to the Germans as they advance towards Dunkirk after Hitler's stop order is rescinded.



Following the fall of Calais and Boulogne, Dunkirk remains the only port available for the evacuation of Allied troops from the Continent.

No. 11 Group, under the command of Vice-Marshal Keith Park, assigns 16 squadrons to the protection of the port. During the evacuation, a total of 32 participate, although they are rotated to provide rest periods and preserve aircraft for the inevitable defence of Britain.

Sub Lt J. B. Kiddle and Lt Geoffrey N. Beaumont RN of 825 NAS are flying Swordfish MkI (photo page above of type) at 8000ft spotting for the HMS Galatea's guns off Calais when they were attacked by two Bf109s. During violent avoiding action Beaumont was thrown out of the rear cockpit and fell from the aircraft to his death. Kiddle evaded the fighters successfully and returned to Detling.

On this Day – May 26

The Inniskilling Fusiliers at Le Cateau 1914

On 26/08/1914 the British, then in retreat from Mons, turned on the pursuing Germans and checked their advance at Le Cateau.

The ensuing battle at the French town was a fearsome one. At one point the German superiority in machine guns was decisive. But the British effort was such that the Germans overestimated the size of the forces confronting them. After the battle, which held the line for long enough to enable

thousands of men to fall back in relatively good order, the British retreat continued.

The 2nd Inniskillings, and the gallant actions of this battalion, on the day are described in Sir Frank Fox's excellent book, "The Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers in the World War" -

"On the morning of Le Cateau, August 26, 1914, the 2nd Inniskillings were on the extreme left of the 4th Division, and thus of the British line. The II Corps, consistently with the orders of GHQ, had made preparations to retire early that morning, and the 4th Division was to cover the retirement and to protect the left flank. The retirement was to begin at 4 a.m. At 2 a.m. General Smith-Dorrien finally decided that it was necessary to stand and to strike the enemy hard before conforming with the general retirement. The Commander-in-Chief, Sir John French, was informed of this decision, and in reply gave General Smith-Dorrien 'a free hand.'

"Owing to the necessity of pushing out the left flank as far as possible to meet the enveloping efforts of the enemy, the British front was extended to a very thin khaki line and there was no possibility of holding any troops in reserve. All four Companies of the 2nd Inniskillings were therefore in the line, B and C at Longsart (north-west of Hancourt), A and D at Esnes (south-east of Cambrai). The 4th Division had its complement of Field Artillery and Infantry, but was without its Divisional Cavalry and cyclists, its Heavy Battery, Field Engineers, Signal Co. Train, Ammunition Column or Field Ambulances. Thus it was heavily handicapped as regards keeping up communications and maintaining ammunition supplies, and could not send its wounded to the rear.

“The battle opened on a somewhat misty morning after a night of drizzling rain. The first experience of the Regiment in the engagement was distinctly dramatic. B and C Companies, the previous night, under Major Wilding, had been ordered to Beauvois, and at dusk barricaded the roads entering the village. During the night the villages all around were fired, telling of the presence of the enemy, but he did not attempt to enter Beauvois. Before dawn these two Companies were ordered to Longsart Farm (Brigade Headquarters). A French Cavalry Patrol was there and went out on reconnaissance, but never returned. Our men settled down to cook breakfast inside the Longsart farm orchard, which was enclosed by a high wall. Fires were just going when there was a heavy burst of machine-gun fire and shrapnel. Favoured by a slight ground mist the enemy had come quite close without being detected. The 2nd Inniskillings rushed out of the orchard and took up position. They were ordered to retire slowly, and did so in good order, and in short rushes, and took up a new position about three-quarters of a mile in the rear, which commanded the reverse slopes of the old position. Later, getting some artillery aid, the Companies advanced to their original position and held this until the general retirement.

When the enemy first advanced, the post of D Company was also forced to retire temporarily a short distance, but as the enemy attack developed it was driven back with loss and the D post recaptured.

Up till 2 p.m. no ground had been lost. Heavy toll was taken of the enemy throughout the day. One Company of the 2nd Inniskillings counted 47 dead of an attacking Battalion before its front during a lull in the engagement when an

officer went forward to bring in the wounded. Retirement in good order was effected late in the afternoon on the orders of General Smith-Dorrien.

Then began the long march back, the 2nd Inniskillings being detailed as rearguard to the 4th Division, but not having to fight again until September 1...”

La Ferte-sous-Jouarre is a small town 66 kilometres to the east of Paris. The La Ferte-sous-Jouarre Memorial is situated in a small park on the south-western edge of the town, on the south bank of the River Marne. The La Ferte-sous-Jouarre Memorial commemorates almost 4,000 officers and men of the British Expeditionary Force who died in August, September and the early part of October 1914 and who have no known grave. The monument consists of a rectangular block of stone, 62 feet by 30 feet and 24 feet high, with the names of the dead engraved on stone panels on all sides of the monument. The monument is surmounted by a sarcophagus and a trophy carved in stone. At the four corners of the pavement are stone piers with urns, carved with the coats of arms of the Empire.

1940

The Siege of Calais came to an end. The surrounded British and French forces had managed to secure vital time for those about to be evacuated from Dunkirk during Operation Dynamo. 100 servicemen who died during the defensive action rest in Calais Southern Cemetery Operation ‘Dynamo’ the evacuation of British, French and Belgian troops from Dunkirk begins.

General Sir John Dill is appointed Chief of the Imperial General Staff, Sir Edmund Ironside becomes C-in-C, Home defense. Empire Day in Britain is declared as a national day of prayer. Coastal towns from Great Yarmouth to Folkestone are declared evacuation areas.



1941

British flying boat spots the Bismarck at 10:36am. Swordfish Torpedo-bombers (above) from the Ark Royal score hits on the Bismarck, disabling her steering gear and rendering her maneuverable. This enables British destroyers to attack after dark and finish the job the next day.

The Aircraft carrier Formidable is severely damaged in the Mediterranean by Stukas.

Britain and Russia sign a treaty in London. Each county



Fairey Swordfish aircraft from HMS Ark Royal attacked the German Battleship, Bismarck, with torpedoes.

pledges itself to fight Germany until final victory and not make a separate peace. The also agreed a 20-year alliance, not to join any coalition or treaty directed against one of them, and not to interfere with the other states internal affairs.

1942

In the Barents Sea, Convoy QP-12 is on its way home to Britain with 15 ships, while Convoy PQ-16 is en-route to Murmansk with 35. Some 260 Luftwaffe aircraft, including He 111 torpedo bombers, swing in to attack, joined by U-

boats, amid appalling weather. QP-12 emerges unscathed, but PQ-16 feels the teeth of a running five-day battle, losing an acceptable six ships.

The battle for the Gazala line begins (Operation Theseus), as the Afrika Korps thrusts towards Tobruk with 560 tanks sweeping round the southern end of the Eighth Army's defensive positions, although the Free French forces at Bir Hacheim manage hold up this advance.

1943

The British Government informs churches throughout England that they may ring their bells freely. The ringing of church bells has been banned, except to warn of an invasion, since the start of the war.

The Red Army begins an offensive against the German forces isolated in the Kuban bridgehead between the Sea of Azov and the Black Sea.

1944

Charles De Gaulle proclaims his Free French movement to be the "Provisional Government of the French Republic." Though the new government wins recognition from Czechoslovakia, Poland, Belgium, Luxembourg, Yugoslavia and Norway, Roosevelt and Churchill are furious and refuse recognition. They retaliate by excluding De Gaulle from the final planning for Operation Overlord.

U.S. troops from Anzio take Cori, 22 miles inland. Mark Clark makes a decision to direct four divisions on Rome, but only one to Valmontone on Highway 6 to cut German retreat.

The Japanese launch a two-pronged attack from Canton and Hankow.

1945

38(Irish) Brigade, 2 LIR:1700 G Coy to move to Murau, 32 miles NE of the Ossiacher See, to help with the evacuation of 25,000 Cossack troops (who had been fighting as allies of Germany) to the Russian lines. The Cossacks were not enthusiastic about being handed over to the Red Army.



Roll of Honour – May 26

Representing their comrades who died on this day

1915

+DOWLING, Henry

Royal Irish Rifles. 1st Btn. Rifleman. 3376. Died 26/05/1915.
Rue-de-Bacquerot No 1 Military Cemetery, Laaventie,
France. Larne WM

+LEDDY, Bernard

Royal Irish Fusiliers. 2nd Btn. Serjeant. 6374. Distinguished Conduct Medal. Medal of St. George 4th Cl. (Russia). Died 26/05/1915. In 1911 Bernard (29) was living in Armagh and working as a printer. Awarded the DCM for conspicuous gallantry on 19/10/1914 for rescuing under fire wounded men lying close to the door of a burning house which was held by the enemy near Houplines. Died 26/05/1915. Brother of Michael Leddy, of 6, Deanery St., Belturbet, Co. Cavan. Also held Medal of St. George 4th Cl. (Russia). Bailleul Communal Cemetery Extension, Nord, France

+NEILL, George

Durham Light Infantry. 1st/8th Btn. Private. 8/2382. Died 26/05/1915. Born at Ballymore, Tandragee. George and his brother are believed to have moved to Durham to work as miners. Son of Thomas and Elizabeth Neill, Ballymore, Tandragee. Klien-Vierstraat British Cemetery, Belgium.

+SHEPHERD, Ralph

Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, 1st Btn. Lance - Corporal. 10104. Died 26/05/15. Parents lived in Magheracregga, Castlederg. Died of wounds received at the Dardanelles.

1916

+McDOWELL, Hugh

Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, 9th Btn. Private/Drummer. 13882. Died 26/05/1916. The Ballymena Observer, on June 2, 1916 reported, "A fortnight ago we intimated in this column that

Drummer Hugh McDowell of the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers (Ulster Division) has been seriously wounded by shrapnel on the shoulder, muscles of the arms and knee, while serving in the trenches and we regret this week to record his death as the result of his wounds which took place on Friday evening last in No.2 Stationary Hospital, Abbeville France.” He was born on the 27/07/1893 at Moat Road, Ballymena and was the son of the late Hugh McDowell, Ballymena and his wife Mary Chambers. At the time of Hugh’s death the family were residing at Kinhilt Street, Ballymena. reside at Kinhilt Street, Ballymena. Drummer McDowell enlisted in September 1914 and after training in Ireland and England he proceeded to the front with the Ulster Division. Prior to his enlistment he was employed in the dressing shop of the Phoenix Weaving Factory, Ballymena and he was a popular member of the Young Conquerors Flute Band. He was a member of Wellington Street Presbyterian Church and was a prominent figure in the choir. Abbeville Military Cemetery. Wellington Street Presbyterian Church RH

1917

+McGILDOWNEY, William

124th Siege Battery, Royal Garrison Artillery. Major. Died 28/05/1917. Age 47. Born July 1890. Son of John McGildowney, Clare. Husband to Nora. Mindel Trench British Cemetery, St. Laurent-Blagny

1918

+HILL, Thomas Moody

1st Bn. Auckland Regiment. Private. 40316. Died 28/05/1918. Age 21. Born Coleraine 27/09/1896. Son of

John & Margaret Hill. Lived Hamilton, New Zealand.
Enlisted Morrinsville, 13/10/1916. Grevillers Memorial in
Grevillers Cemetery, New Zealand RH

+MOORE, Alexander

Royal Irish Rifles. 11th Btn. Rifleman. 18495. Died
26/05/1918. Aged 23. Born in Lisburn where he lived, he
enlisted in the town in 11 RIR and embarked with them for
France from Bordon in October 1915. He served with the
Ulster Division at the Somme, in Flanders and at Cambrai,
and was subsequently transferred to 11/13 RIR. Reported
missing and subsequently wounded and a PoW, he died of
wounds received at St. Quentin, at Dusseldorf. Only son of
Alexander and Margaret Moore of 72 Bridge Street, Lisburn.
His brother-in-law was also on active service. Cologne
Southern Cemetery, Germany

1940

+ANDREWS, Thomas John

Royal Artillery. 3 Searchlight Regt. 12 Bty. Gunner. 1473907.
Died Between 26/05/1940 and 02/06/1940. Aged 21. Son of
Robert John and Susan Andrews, of Dollingstown, Co.
Down. Dunkirk Memorial, Nord, France

+BURNETT, John William

Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, 2nd Btn. Fusilier. 6975601. Died
Between 26/05/1940 and 31/05/1940. Son of John and
Elizabeth Burnett, of Enniskillen. Dunkirk Memorial, Nord,
France

+LOGAN, Norman

Seaforth Highlanders, 6th Btn. Corporal. 3240544. Died 26/05/1940. Aged 34. Son of Francis and Mary Logan, of Doagh, Co. Antrim; husband to Alice Logan, of Doagh. Dunkirk Town Cemetery, Nord, France

+McCAFFREY, John William

Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, 2nd Btn. Fusilier. 6980417. Died between 26/05/1940 and 12/08/1940. Age 37. Son of Patrick and Annie McCaffrey, of Lisnaskea, Co. Fermanagh; husband to Elizabeth McCaffrey, of Lisnaskea. Dunkirk Town Cemetery, France

+McKEARY, Samuel James

Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, 2nd Btn. Fusilier. 6980173. Died 26/05/1940. Aged 20. Son of Samuel and Ellen McKeary, of Coleraine. Dunkirk Memorial, Nord, France

+OWEN, Thomas Joseph

Leicestershire Regiment, 2/5th Btn. Serjeant. 4856012. Died 26/05/1940. Aged 29. Son of George and Sabina Owen; husband to Bridget Owen, of Waterside, Co. Londonderry. Carvin Communal Cemetery, Pas de Calais, France

1942

+JOHNSTON, James Hastings C

Cameronians (Scottish Rifles), 1st Btn. Rifleman. 3317935. Died 26/05/1942. Aged 23. M.A. (St. Andrews). Son of the Revd. James Johnston, and of Susan Crockett Johnston, of Portstewart. Imphal War Cemetery, [India](#)

+WILLIS, William Richard

RAFVR. Sergeant. 1212906. Died 26/05/1942. 153 Sqdn.
Mount St Joseph Roman Catholic Churchyard Ballycranebeg,
County Down

1943

+BUSBY, Stanley

RAFV. Sergeant (Wireless Op./Air Gunner). 1138659. Died
26/05/1943. Aged 26. 51 Sqdn. Son of William and Mary
Busby, of Castlereagh. Uden War Cemetery, Noord-Brabant,
Netherlands

VETERAN

JACKSON, Norman

Royal Ulster Rifles. Rifleman. 7019965. From Belfast. He
enlisted in the Royal Ulster Rifles on 02/09/1940. Norman
was taken Prisoner of War in North Africa in January 1943
and after initially being detained in Italy for a year he
became P.O.W. 6158 at Stalag XVIII-A at Wolfsberg, Austria.
He finally arrived back in the U.K. on 26/05/1945.

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 houston.mckelvey@btinternet.com

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