



## remembrance ni



**Monty addresses his Irish soldiers before D-Day. 2 Btn Royal Ulster Rifles will be headed for Sword.**

## **D-Day - Rifleman Billy Moore**

**William James Moore, known to family and friends as Billy served with the Royal Ulster Rifles, 2nd Battalion .**

In June 1942, aged 18, Billy joined the Young Soldiers' 70th Battalion of The Royal Ulster Rifles. They trained in Essex before disbanding and splitting between the London Irish Regiment and Royal Ulster Rifles training.

Billy Moore was among the group sent to Hoik, Scotland. There, they made their way to Inverairry on the coast where they carried out beach landing exercises. He was twenty years old.

Next stop for the young infantryman was Dartmount, England, and on to Droxford near Southampton. There, they camped in tents for around three weeks awaiting the invasion of France. Security was tight and they were not allowed to leave the camp.

Visitors to Droxford included Princess Elizabeth and General Montgomery. With plans in place, it was then on to Portsmouth to make final preparations for Normandy.

Up until Portsmouth, the men got leave every nine weeks. Sometimes for a week or two weeks, the boys would return to Northern Ireland. In the 2nd Battalion, A Company, 9th Platoon, a trio of Ulstermen –Burrows, Bart, and Crangle – were known as “The BBC”.

## **Royal Ulster Rifles on D-Day**

After three weeks waiting in Portsmouth, The Rifles made two unsuccessful attempts to land on the French coast. The seas were too rough on the first passes. Finally, on 6th June 1944, William James Moore and the Royal Ulster Rifles set foot on Sword Beach.



General Montgomery reads the 'Packing List' for a 2 RUR Rifleman preparing for the D-Day landing, Operation OVERLORD. Rfn McCracken stands before him, wearing and carrying the contents of that list. (original image copyright RUR Museum)

Billy recalled - “We landed half a mile from Sword Beach We had no idea what it was going to be like. We were met with tanks and machine gun fire; they hit us with everything. We didn’t think there would be so much against us. I saw lads younger than me lying dead in the field with their kit around them. You would have thought they were sleeping.”

Many of his comrades didn't make it ashore. He remembered the sea being rough. Men weighed down by packs, ammunition and useless fold-up bicycles, drowned long before they neared land. Billy's battalion lost more than 180 men before they reached Cambes Wood, caught in crossfire and stifled by Panzers.

## **From Cambes to Belgium**

Billy survived a bomb attack in Cambes Wood. Crangle, a friend from Belfast mentioned earlier died while caught in a blast as he chatted near the top of a trench. Undeterred by the amount of tragic loss, The Rifles would be one of the first battalions to reach Caen three weeks later.

“I buried my mate at Cambes Wood. We were having a wee smoke and a wee pow-wow on the edge of the trench when we heard a shell coming over and jumped. He wasn't quick enough and got it in the back. A lot of good mates were killed at Cambes Wood.”

The Rifles waited on a hillside outside Caen with a Canadian battalion watching as hundreds of bombers attacked the old town. The following day, they entered the fray, fighting through the streets.

“We travelled for another 250 miles to the River Seine and we had to create a bridge for the people coming after us. We were leading the way.”

The Rifles came under fire from German tanks as they began a trek of almost 300 miles into Belgium. They fed, slept and sheltered in what vehicles were left undamaged.

## Remembered in Regimental Journal

While serving in Normandy, Billy's actions saw him remembered in the regimental journal by Lieutenant Cyril Rand -

“Before heading out on patrol, Moore produced a testament which all men had been given before the landings.

“He read extracts from it to the men.”

Rand noted. “At first, the episode struck me as rather incongruous: these soldiers, some of whom had a reputation for hard drinking and pay day brawling, who had probably only seen the inside of a church on church parades, had obviously been quite moved. I also said thank you to Rifleman Moore and, like the members of my patrol, I meant it.”

## Injured

As the fighting increased throughout Belgium, Moore received an injury that saw him sent to the field hospital.

From there, the army flew him to Queen Elizabeth Military Hospital in Edgbaston, Birmingham. He remained there for seven months before returning to Northern Ireland. He would not return to the front line. At home, he received further treatment at Lagan Valley Hospital in Lisburn. For a time, Moore still wore a caliper on the injured leg.

Billy Moore lived in Lisburn after the war and in 2006, performed the official opening of a new lounge for the Royal

British Legion. He was often quoted in local media with his memories from D-Day and the Normandy campaign.

## **Remembering Rifleman Billy Moore**

Rifleman Moore passed away on the 65th anniversary of the D-Day Landings. He died peacefully on 06/06/2009. Billy was survived by wife Edna, son Billy, daughter-in-law Lynda, grand-daughter Suzanne and her husband Reuben.

His funeral took place on Tuesday 09/06/2009 after a service in Lisburn Cathedral conducted by The Reverend Canon Sam Wright assisted by the Reverend Canon Alex Cheevers.

A lone regimental piper played as four members of the Royal Ulster Rifles Old Comrades Association (Lisburn Branch) carried the coffin. Rifleman Moore was buried with some military ceremony, his coffin draped in the Queen's colours and the Ulster Rifles standard. Retired Major John Jamieson gave the oration before Rifleman William James Moore was laid to rest in Blaris New Cemetery.

## **D-Day - Peter McCambridge**

**The second in a series about NI people on D Day. Peter McCambridge of Ballymena won his DCM on the 'Longest Day' - but he had, in fact, dropped into Normandy in the late evening of June 5, 1944.**

SUPREME HEADQUARTERS  
ALLIED EXPEDITIONARY FORCE



Soldiers, Sailors and Airmen of the Allied Expeditionary Force!

You are about to embark upon the Great Crusade, toward which we have striven these many months. The eyes of the world are upon you. The hopes and prayers of liberty-loving people everywhere march with you. In company with our brave Allies and brothers-in-arms on other Fronts, you will bring about the destruction of the German war machine, the elimination of Nazi tyranny over the oppressed peoples of Europe, and security for ourselves in a free world.

Your task will not be an easy one. Your enemy is well trained, well equipped and battle-hardened. He will fight savagely.

But this is the year 1944 ! Much has happened since the Nazi triumphs of 1940-41. The United Nations have inflicted upon the Germans great defeats, in open battle, man-to-man. Our air offensive has seriously reduced their strength in the air and their capacity to wage war on the ground. Our Home Fronts have given us an overwhelming superiority in weapons and munitions of war, and placed at our disposal great reserves of trained fighting men. The tide has turned ! The free men of the world are marching together to Victory !

I have full confidence in your courage, devotion to duty and skill in battle. We will accept nothing less than full Victory !

Good Luck ! And let us all beseech the blessing of Almighty God upon this great and noble undertaking.

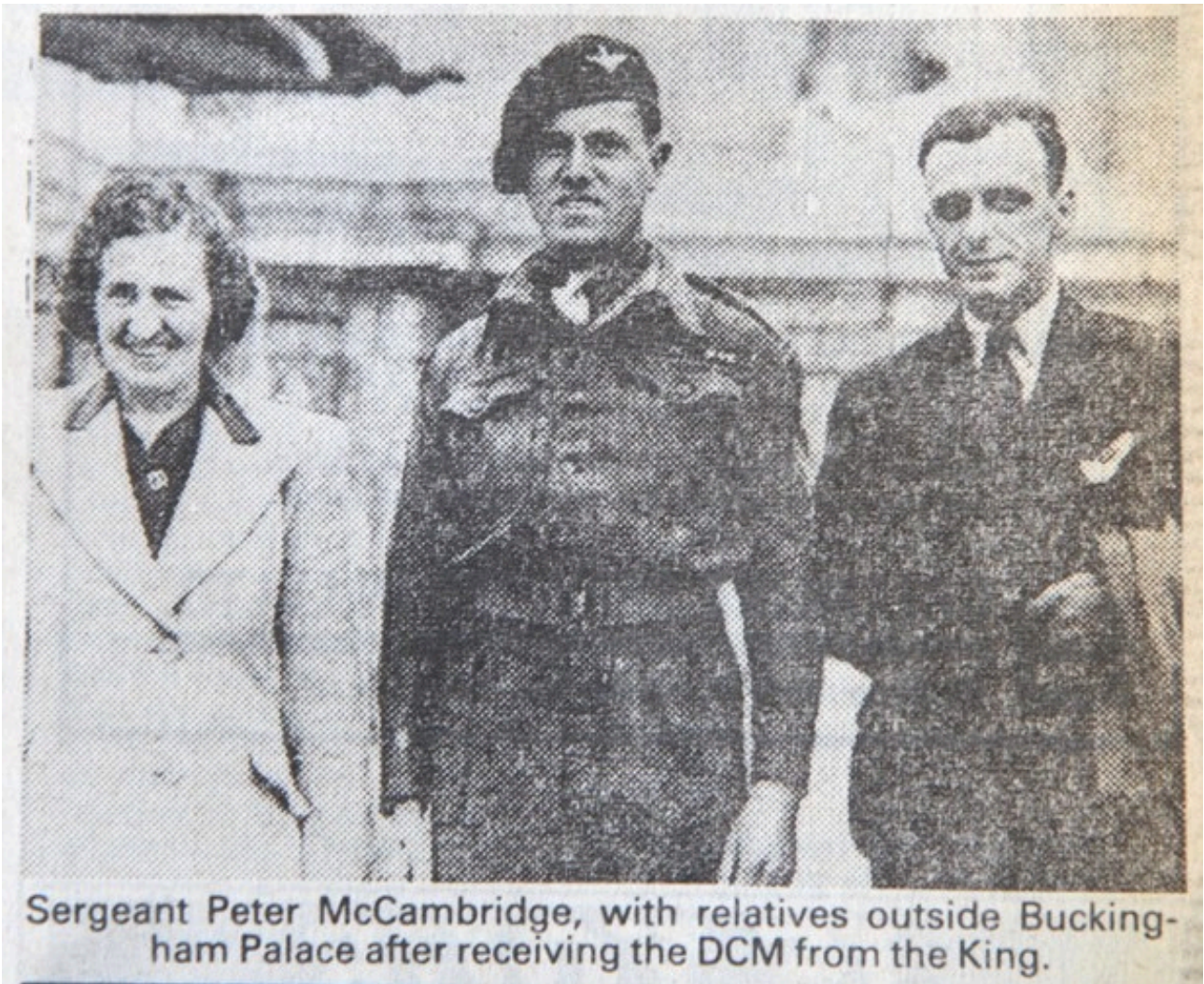
*Dwight D. Eisenhower*



**Photo - The Bridge at Benouville - later re-named 'Pegasus Bridge'**

Anyone who has seen the film of 'The Longest Day' will remember the scenes featuring Richard Todd and the Glider troops of the Oxs and Bucks Light Infantry attacking 'Pegasus Bridge'.

Peter McCambridge, then an NCO with the 7th (Light Infantry) Parachute Btn. of the 6th Airborne Division, was



fighting only yards from this famous action in the nearby village of Le Port.

and modestly was one of the heroes of D-Day.

**His unit's record of his DCM award reads -**

Unit : "B" Company, 7th Parachute Battalion

Service No. : 7012426

Awards : Distinguished Conduct Medal

"This NCO was one of the parachute troops who landed behind the German lines in Normandy on the night 5th/6th June 1944. During the fighting for Bénouville bridge on the 6th June, McCambridge's platoon was responsible for holding the village of Le Port.

"At one period his section became detached from the platoon and the fighting, which went on for 21 hours almost without pause, was particularly fierce.

"McCambridge noticed that one house dominated the scene of the fighting. By skilful use of a smoke grenade and displaying the greatest dash he got his section across a road swept by Machine Gun fire and into the house. He used anti-tank grenades to smash open the garden gate and the door of the house.

"Once inside the house he was completely cut off from the rest of his company, who actually had withdrawn slightly, but he was in a dominating position and became the target for the enemy who greatly outnumbered his section and were surrounding him.

"So well did he dispose his men however and so splendid was his leadership that he held this isolated house until the seaborne troops eventually entered the village from the other end, several hours later. At times the enemy were close enough to try and beat down the door by beating it with their rifle butts - McCambridge dealt with such attacks by having grenades dropped on them from the upper windows.

"There is no doubt that the holding of this dominating house seriously weakened the enemy attacks and greatly assisted the battalion to carry out its job of holding the bridge.

"On the 20th June at Bois de Bavent during a company attack Sgt McCambridge, together with another NCO, saved the life of his platoon commander, who had been wounded and whose phosphorus bomb was burning in his pouch. Between them they extracted the burning bomb and

dragged the officer to cover despite heavy and accurate mortar and Machine Gun fire.

"McCambridge has shown himself throughout the three weeks continuous fighting to be a truly magnificent NCO. He is calm, cheerful and always reliable."

**Acknowledgment** - Ballymena Times

## **D-Day Richard Keegan**

*The third in a series of NI people on D-Day. Lurgan man who joined the Royal Ulster Rifles in 1941 and landed on Sword Beach on June 6, 1944*

**At the outbreak of war in September 1939, Richard Keegan was sixteen years old and living in Lurgan. A 'wee notion' that he took, to join the Army, was rebuked by his policeman father - who was insistent that they wouldn't take him on. Not to be deterred and reluctant to give up on his 'wee notion', he applied two years later, when he was eighteen, and was duly accepted.**

Stationed at the 'Low Camp' in Saint Patrick's Barracks in Ballymena, Richard, along with the other new recruits, underwent six weeks of rigorous induction before being transferred to Palace Barracks and the Seventieth Battalion of the Royal Ulster Rifles.

Although involved in active service during the Belfast Blitz, their superiors made the decision to break up the Seventieth Battalion in late 1942. Richard, although disheartened, was

transferred along with some of his colleagues, to D Company, Eighteenth Platoon, 2nd Battalion of the Rifles. It was here that his training began in earnest.



### **'Monty Wants Us'**

Unaware of the high-level plans being made for their battalion, rumours started to circulate among the men in April 1944 that they would be taking part in a landing in North Africa.

'Monty wants us on his job' was the word in the mess. However the company was moved to Draxford in Dorset, to the 'concentration area', joining up with the other two-and-a-half million servicemen assembling in the South of England for Operation Overlord.

### **The Big Scheme**

Secrecy was of the utmost importance, and even at this point, Richard and his friends were unaware of their mission. Confined to their barracks, all that Mr Green, their platoon officer would tell them, was 'you're going on a big scheme'.

Richard vividly recalls walking into the tent were the whole

set-up was laid out in front of them, and although shown the piece of coastline where they would be landing, he was unable to decipher the exact location. He knew it was somewhere in France or Spain but that was all the information he could glean.

## **Training**

For the next year, physical fitness and discipline were the priorities. Sea landings, assault courses, mountain and ammunition training became part of Richard's daily routine. However, mental wellbeing was also stressed. An awareness of the situation in Germany, team building, and preparation for the effects of battle were integral elements of the men's training.

## **D-Day: The crossing**

As the history books record, the mission was initially planned for June 4. Richard and his platoon were duly assembled on their landing craft on June 3. However, the well-documented bad weather scuppered plans for the invasion, and the men were taken off the ship, only to be brought back two days later. Crossing the Channel, Richard recalls that the tension was palpable. The men were fired up, but fear was abated by the feeling that this was the culmination of all those years of training.

## **Landing**

Disembarking at Sword beach, Richard, loaded down with ammunition, equipment, a radio and a bicycle, was soaked from head to foot by the heavy swell that was surrounding

the shore. He recalls saving one of the smallest members of the platoon (seated at the front of the Company photograph) from going under.

At first glance, the Germans were not in evidence on the beach, but their machine guns were continuously bombarding the landing craft. However this fire seemed far enough away to pose no immediate threat.

Richard remembers making his way up a ramp onto the promenade and coming face to face with a row of fishermen's houses. The company, following their commander, made their way up a narrow street towards their first assembly point. Arriving at 'the Orchard', a head count was taken to establish if everyone was present and correct.

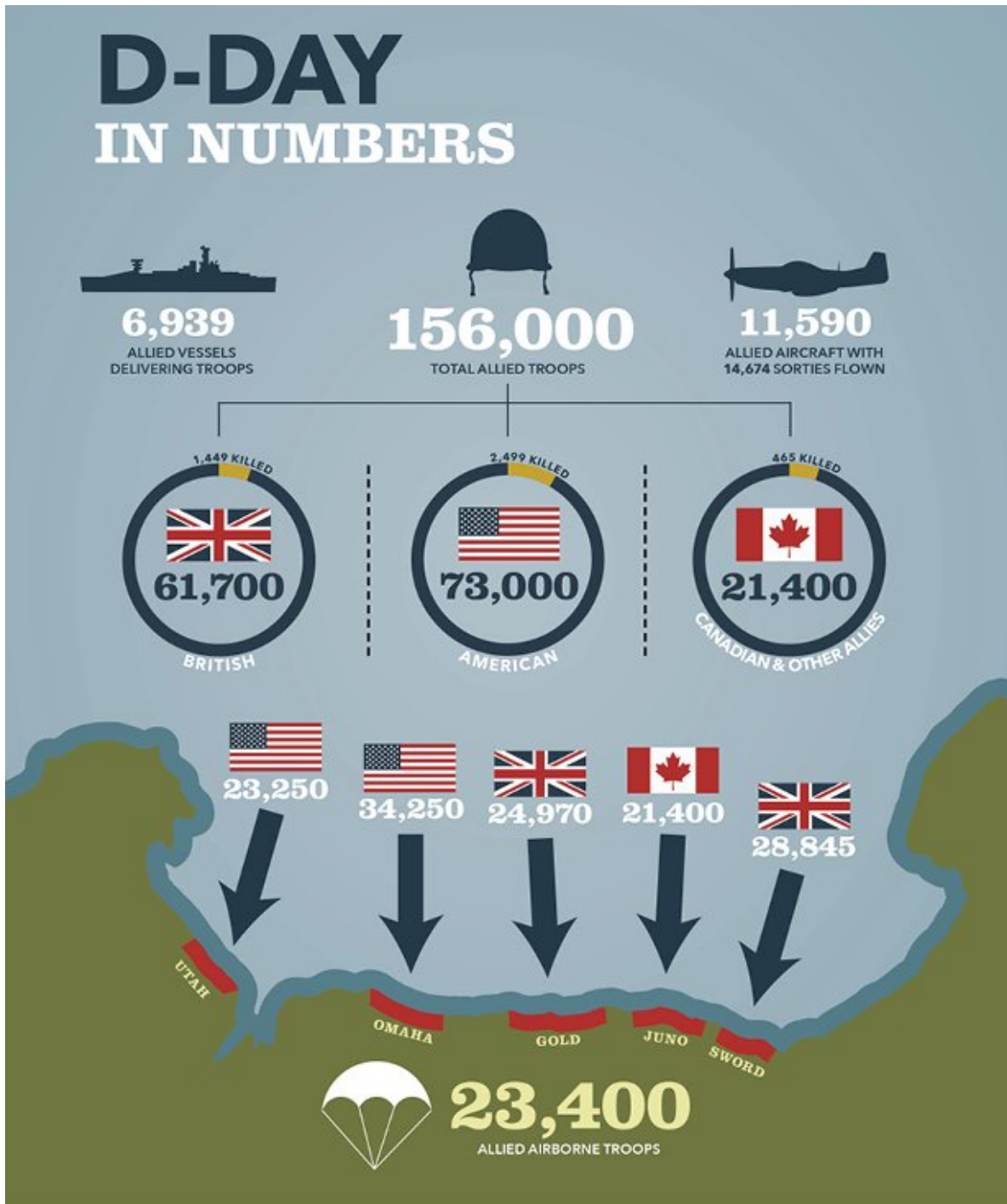
The men then made their way to 'the farm', a rural farmhouse surrounded by a square of trees, six or seven miles inland, and where they dug in for the night. On their way they had encountered welcoming French civilians. Their generous offers of wine were kindly refused by Richard.

By the end of the first day it had been estimated that the troops landing on the Easterly beaches of Sword and Juno would have taken the town of Caen, some nine miles south. However circumstances and conditions decreed this objective over-optimistic, as all the Battalions were some miles off, by the fall of night.

### **The next day: Early morning snipers**

The men had been warned to watch for snipers. The roll call

at the end of the first day had registered some of the Company out of action. It wasn't until the next morning that Richard witnessed his first victim at close proximity. His friend Jimmy Pedlaw, whom he had signed up with in



Belfast, had ventured from his dugout and had been caught in the neck.

## **First attack on Cambes Wood**

Jimmy's incident did not detain the Company, who had to press on to the town of Caen. The next mission was to secure Cambes Wood, and D Company was to lead the attack. Richard and his colleagues cycled for a number of miles to the outskirts of the Wood where they dumped their bikes and came face to face with a large cornfield that they had to clear, in order to reach their destination.

There was some shelling going on, and the men divided into two groups. The mission had to be aborted when the Company commander Major Allsworth (who had been leading the other group) was killed.

Because of the situation at the cornfield it would have been impossible to take back the injured, so it was decided to leave them and entrust them to the care of the German forces. The men were not to know how foolish this was.

## **Cambes Wood**

*I gazed upon a foreign field  
Where British blood was shed  
And there I placed a poppy  
In remembrance of our dead*

*My heart was full of sorrow  
And my tears began to flow  
When came those misty memories  
Of that day so long ago*

*I saw the wood of Cambes appear  
In the light of early morn  
And riflemen waiting to advance  
Across the field of growing corn*

*When came the thunder of the guns  
Lines of riflemen arose as one  
And over the field into enemy fire  
They advanced at a steady run*

*They stormed and took the wood  
And Cambe village fell by noon  
The cost was the blood of riflemen  
On that field on that day of June*

*I bow my head in solemn prayer  
My words are firm and true  
Rest in peace you Ulster Rifles  
For we still remember you*

*A memorial now stands there  
In temperance of those who died  
But regardless of the passing years  
We still speak of them with pride*

This poem was written by a member of the Battalion in memory of those who fought at Cambes Wood.

## **End of the fighting**

On June 9, 150 yards from the edge of the wood and under heavy shelling from the Germans, an 88 dropped close to Richard, injuring his side and effectively ending his part in Operation Overlord. After making his way precariously to a

'safe area' he came across the Company's stretcher-bearers, both wounded.

After administering first aid to each other, the men were eventually moved down to their medical post, and from there to a large tent on the beach. Richard had come full circle in three days!

He left France soon after, for a Canadian hospital on the South Coast of England, and was then transferred to a British military hospital in Yorkshire. His requests to rejoin the second Battalion were dismissed, his permanent injuries precluding any return to the infantry and 'the action'. Richard joined the Royal Corps of Signals and spent the rest of the war in a backup unit, who played an important supporting role for the advancing troops in France and Germany. In 1946 he left the military and returned to civilian life.

## **Remembering**

Richard acknowledges that his injuries may have saved him. This grudging acknowledgement is tinged with a certain amount of regret - as a soldier he regrets missing the battles that he had trained for and the action that he had mentally and physically prepared for, and for the comrades that he never saw again.

This article first appeared on the BBC's [Your Place & Mine](#) website.

## **D-Day - Andy Andrews from Killyleagh in HMS Pink**

Seventy years after the event, Andy Andrews was interviewed by the Down Recorder. The newspaper reported

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Tears well in the eyes of 90 year-old Andy Andrews as he recalls the horror of the D-Day landings. The Royal Navy veteran, who was onboard HMS Pink off the Nazi-occupied Normandy coast 70 years ago, takes time to regain his composure, before painting a chilling and vivid picture of the unimaginable horrors of war.

Sitting in his New Line home outside Killinchy, Mr. Andrews recalls bodies floating in the bloodstained water, hundreds of soldiers within his immediate view shot dead by German snipers before they had even made landfall.

“It was truly horrific,” he said, stopping briefly for a moment as the horror of seeing friends and comrades gunned down that fateful day on June 6, 1944, comes flooding back.

Last week, television channels were flooded with documentaries commemorating the 70th anniversary of the Normandy landings.

Mr. Andrews, who is the President of the Killyleagh and Killinchy Royal British Legion branch, said he tried to watch many of the programmes, but admits he struggled.

“I had to turn away; I couldn’t watch. I started to cry as it brought it all back. I lost a lot of good friends. It was horrific then and it’s still horrific now,” he said. “I saw one veteran a

year younger than me crying as he recalled during an interview what happened. That's what war does to you.

“What I witnessed will never leave me. I was one of the lucky ones. I lived to tell the tale, but what I witnessed is not something you talk about often. The sights, sounds and smells of what I witnessed 70 years ago have never left me. They never will. I witnessed things no man should ever see. It was the true horror of war.”

Wearing his service medals with pride, Mr. Andrews, who is one of the oldest D-Day veterans in Northern Ireland, said he set sail with his fellow crew in the dead of night heading for the French coast as part of the largest amphibious assault in history to secure freedom in Europe.

Prior to arriving off the coast of Normandy he had been involved in the Battle of the Atlantic, widely regarded as the longest continuous military campaign of World War Two, running from 1939 to the defeat of Germany in 1945.

It was at its height from mid-1940 through to the end of 1943 with Andy Andrews helping HMS Pink launch depth charges and fire torpedoes at German U-boats, many of which were sunk.

Mr. Andrews and his crew were briefed about the D-Day operation in England before joining the largest ever wartime military flotilla which headed across the English Channel with thousands of soldiers on board battle ships heading for the French coast, unaware of the horrors which awaited as they prepared to storm the beaches.

“We spent some time in England after the Battle of the Atlantic before we got our orders and headed for France.

We anchored off Normandy to provide aerial cover for the soldiers storming the beaches but had to contend with German bombers flying overhead,” he continued.

“Our orders were to bombard the German hideouts. As we did so, soldiers were jumping into the sea from the landing craft and were up to their waists in water, but many were mowed down like rabbits. My God, it was horrific. It’s a scene that never leaves me. There were bodies everywhere.

“Some soldiers did survive and made it to the beach but they were met by a hail of bullets fired by German snipers and fell dead. They were exposed and could do nothing. Soldiers who escaped the gunfire had to keep going. It was impossible to stop to help comrades. It was awful.”

Mr. Andrews said despite the bloodshed all around he had to try and concentrate on his job, helping the crew of HMS Pink to continue with the allied military bombardment in his role as an electrical engineer.

“We had a job to do and had to remain focused but it wasn’t easy amidst the mayhem,” he continued.

“I had to make sure the ship was running and in between times help the rest of the crews keep a watch out for German subs. The situation was chaotic and it seemed that time stood still. The bombardment appeared to go on for ages. The soldiers who stormed the beaches are the real heroes, but many of them never returned home. They paid the supreme sacrifice.”

Originally from Killyleagh, Mr. Andrews said it was during the D-Day landings when HMS Pink took the full force of a German torpedo.

“I was in my hammock when there was a massive explosion that rocked the ship to its core,” he explained. “I went up on deck and looked towards the back of the ship but all I could see was water. The ship had literally split in two, but she never sunk.

“However, it was clear the vessel was in trouble and I and many others jumped into the sea where we were rescued by an American torpedo boat before we were eventually taken back to England before I was transferred to the HMS Duke of York, ending up in Tokyo at the end of the war.

Mr. Andrews said during HMS Pink’s involvement in the D-Day landings it was “action day and night” with no let up as the continual bombardment of the German lines continued.

“When I see the events of D-Day on television I think of the wives who lost loved ones and the mothers who lost sons. I think of the heartbreak thousands of families who lost loves ones experienced.

“When I think back to what I witnessed it’s frightening. My God, the water was awash with bodies’ it was horrific,” he recalled, taking time again to compose himself and gently wipe tears from his eyes before continuing.

“There were bodies on the beach and those soldiers who did make it from the landing craft panicked. They were running everywhere and being picked off like sitting ducks. The beach was literally covered in dead bodies and it was numbing to witness such a sight.

“The full horror of war was unfolding right in front of me and it was chilling,” he said. “Young people today do not know how much they owe these brave soldiers and the sacrifices they made. Every one of them is a hero. Their courage knew no bounds and they must never be forgotten.”

Mr. Andrews said he took time last Friday on the 70th anniversary of the D-Day landings to remember his fallen comrades.

He added: “Soldiers hit by snipers were in the water screaming for help. There were literally bodies everywhere. The horror of war is something I won’t ever forget. People need to be grateful for the sacrifices of others. They must never forget those who have gone before and what they did for them. We must always remember them.”

## Roll of Honour – June 6

*Representing their comrades who died on this day*

**1915**

**+ARDIS, James**

RMLI. Private. CH/336(S). Died of wounds 06/06/1915. Aged 21. Enrolled 28/09/1914. In Gallipoli 01/01/1915 - 06/06/1915. Born Belfast 17/01/1894. Son of James and Sarah Ardis, Mervue Street, Belfast. Belfast Corporation RH. Helles Memorial, Turkey. ADM 159/143/336

### **+BLANEY, Terrance**

Durham Light Infantry, 15th Btn. Private. 13515. Died 06/06/1915. Born at Derry, enlisted at Durham. 15th Battalion Durham Light Infantry was formed at Newcastle in September 1914, as part of the Third New Army (K3), and came under orders of 64th Brigade in 21st Division. They then moved to Halton Park, Buckinghamshire, which was offered at the outbreak of war to the War Office by Alfred de Rothschild for use as a training camp. In December 1914 they moved to Maidenhead, Berkshire, and in April 1915 returned to Halton Park. Aylesbury Cemetery, Buckinghamshire.

### **+McILROY, William**

Royal Irish Rifles, 2nd Btn. "C" Coy. Lance Corporal. 9223. Died 16/06/1915. Aged 31. Son of the late William McIlroy; husband of Elizabeth McIlroy, of 31, Aberdeen St., Belfast. Ypres (Menin Gate) Memorial, West-Vlaanderen, Belgium

### **+McMULLAN, C**

Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, 2nd Btn. Private. 3054. Died 06/06/1915. Age 28. Son of Francis McMullan, of 5, Norfolk Street, Belfast. Le Treport Military Cemetery, France

### **+RAINEY, Charles**

Royal Irish Rifles, 1st Btn. A Coy. Rifleman. 7163. Died 06/06/1915. Age 25. Husband to Frances Johnston (formerly Rainey), of 24, Crumlin St., Crumlin Rd., Belfast. Ipswich Old Cemetery

### **+WADDELL, Samuel John**

Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers. 1st Btn. Corporal. 8943. Died 06/06/1915. Age 25 . Son of Emily Waddell, of Tullyrush, Seskinore, Tyrone, and the late Andrew John Waddell. Helles Memorial, Turkey (including Gallipoli)

**+WAKEHAM, James Edward**

Essex Regiment, 1st Btn. Serjeant. 6258. Died 06/06/1915. Age 30. Husband of Martha Annie Moffatt (formerly Wakeham), of 49, Whitehall Parade, Belfast. Helles Memorial, Turkey (including Gallipoli)

**1916**

**+GORMAN, Samuel Edwin**

Royal Irish Rifles, 9th Btn. Lance Corporal. 14715. Died 06/06/1916. Age 19. Son of Mary Gorman, of 1, Florence Terrace, Ballygomartin Rd., Belfast, and the late William Matthew Gorman. Authuille Military Cemetery, Authuille, France

**+McCLELLAND, David Carson**

Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers. 2nd Btn. Private. 27925. Died 06/06/1916. Age 22. Husband to Sarah McClelland, of Dunlop St., Coleraine. Warloy - Baillion Communal Cemetery, France. Coleraine WM. Irish Society School WM. New Row Presbyterian Church WM

**+McILWAINE, John Fulton**

Canadian Infantry, 28th Btn. Private. 427330. Died 06/06/1916. Age 41. Born Templepatrick 22/04/1877. He worked as a teamster. Enlisted Saskatchewan, Canada on 22/06/1915. He had eight siblings. His brother Thomas died serving with the Royal Irish Rifles on 30/09/1918. Son of Jane (nee Fulton) McIlwaine, of Templepatrick, and the late Andrew McIlwaine. Ypres (Menin Gate) Memorial, Belgium. Antrim Town WM. Loanends United Free Church - now Loanends Presbyterian Church RH

### **+QUINN, W J**

Royal Irish Rifles, 9th Btn. C Coy. Rifleman. 3590. Died 06/06/1916. Age 22. Son of Mrs. Mary Quinn, of 27, Little Sackville St., Belfast, and the late James Quinn. Authuille Military Cemetery, Authuille, France

### **+SHANNON, P**

Connaught Rangers, 6th Btn. Serjeant. 2490. Died 06/06/1916. Age 22. Son of Dominick and Margaret Shannon, of 17, Gotha Street, Belfast. Le Treport Military Cemetery, France

### **+SIMMS, A**

Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, 2nd Btn. Private. 20983. Died 06/06/1916. Age 19 years old. Son of Daniel and Margaret Simms, of 508, Dumbarton Rd., Glasgow. Born in Belfast. Authuille Military Cemetery, Authuille, France

### **+TODD, Samuel**

Royal Irish Rifles, 9th Btn. Rifleman. 17748. Died 06/06/1916. Age 18. Son of Stephen and Maggie Todd, of

36, Chief St., Belfast. Authuille Military Cemetery, Authuille, France

**1917**

**+GRAY, W**

Machine Gun Corps (Infantry). 107th Coy. Serjeant. 19441. Died 06/06/1917. Age 36. Husband to Margaret E. Gray, of 62, Bright St., Belfast. Pond Farm Cemetery, Belgium

**+MOORE, Richard**

Machine Gun Corps (Infantry), 107th Coy. Corporal. 19529. Died 06/06/1917. Age 23. Son of Robert and Mary Anne Moore, of 8, Kenmare St., Belfast. Pond Farm Cemetery, Belgium

**1918**

**+BAILIE, Matthewson**

Royal Irish Fusiliers, 1st Btn. Serjeant. 9721. Died 06/06/1918 whilst a prisoner of war. Age 34. Disembarked France on 19/12/1914. Also known as Samuel Smyth. Husband to Margaret Bailie, of 1, William St., Milford, Armagh. Born at Belfast. Ham British Cemetery, Muille-Villette, France

**+LARMOUR, A**

Royal Irish Rifles, 15th Btn. Rifleman. S/11695. Died 06/06/1918. Age 37. Husband of Margaret Larmour, of 101, Leopold St., Belfast. Ham British Cemetery, Muille-Villette, France

### **+MAGILL, James**

Royal Irish Fusiliers, 9<sup>th</sup> Btn. A Coy. (formerly 1805 North Irish Horse). Private. 41435. Died 06/06/1918. Aged 25. He was to see a lot of action and to suffer shellshock but met his fate as a consequence of the German Spring Offensive of 1918. He was part of the retreat from St Quentin and was taken prisoner. He was held in a compound which was bombed by the French, the airship raid killing over twenty British prisoners. Confirmed by an entry in German records. Son of Dyas (or Dias), a greengrocer, and Catherine (sometimes called Cassandra, Magill, of 25, Springwell St, Ballymena. James had been a pork cutter and then a railway labourer in his prewar life. Ham British Cemetery, Muille-Villete. His death plaque and medals are now prominently displayed at Ballymena Services Club.

### **+MARTIN, John**

Royal Irish Rifles. 16th Btn. Corporal. 838. Died 06 / 06/1918. Age 22. Son of Alexander and Mary Martin, of Downpatrick St., Crossgar, Co. Down. Ham British Cemetery, MuilleVillette, France

### **+MOORE, A**

Royal Irish Rifles, 16th Btn. Rifleman. 12/414. Died 06/06/1918. Age 23. Son of Mrs. Margaret Moore, of Taylor's Row, Carrickfergus. Ham British Cemetery, Muille-Villette, France

### **+RAFFERTY, Francis**

American Expeditionary Force. Corporal. Died 06/06/1918. Emigrated to USA from Armagh. The Armagh Gazette

(23/08/1918) reported on a letter of condolence and appreciation of Francis to his parents from Capt. J O Green, 23<sup>rd</sup> Infantry, American army. His brother James died serving with the Royal Irish Fusiliers on 06/05/1915. Son of John and Ellen Rafferty, Navan St., Armagh. St Patrick's Roman Catholic Graveyard, Armagh.

**+SCOTT, Alexander Scott**

Royal Irish Rifles, 2nd Btn. Rifleman. 7840. Died 06/06/1918. Aged 26. Son of Alexander and the late Caroline Scott nee Higgin, step son of Margaret Scott nee Miller, of Tobergill Street, Belfast ; Husband to Catherine Scott nee McQuiston, of 20, Dundee Street, Belfast. Wulverghem-Lindenhoek Road Military Cemetery, Belgium. Northern Whig 19/10/1918

**+SMALL, Joseph**

Machine Gun Corps (Infantry), 8th Btn. Private. 6704. Died 06/06/1918. Age 21. Previously served with the Connaught Rangers (4/5773). Born Cloughfern 31/12/1896. Lived in Banbridge. Son of William and Elizabeth (nee Gallagher) Small, of 5, Seapatricks Villas, Lurgan Road Banbridge. La Neuville-Aux-Larris Military Cemetery, France

**1920**

**+McFERRAN, Thomas**

Royal Air Force, Cadet College (Cranwell). Aircraftman 2nd Class. 304638. Died 06/06/1920. Age 19. Son of Mrs. Hester McFerran, of 20, Mountcollyer St., Belfast. Born at Larne. Larne New Cemetery

**1940**

**+CROOKS, James Charles**

Royal Army Service Corps. Corporal. T/56782. Died 06/06/1940. Aged 22. Son of Daniel and Mary E. Crooks, of Richhill, Co. Armagh. Alexandria (Chatby) Military and War Memorial Cemetery, Egypt

**1941**

**+BROWN, Doreen Meta**

Auxiliary Territorial Service. Private. W/38803. Died 06/06/1941. Aged 18. Daughter of James and Ethel Beatrice Brown, of Downpatrick. Belfast City Cemetery

**+CUSICK, Alexander**

Royal Artillery. Gunner. 1093514. Died 02/06/1941. Aged 30. 133 Field Regiment. Alexander Cusick was the son of John Cusick. Husband to Kathleen who died in 2010, aged 101. He was born on 11/11/1910 in Glasgow. University of Glasgow. He graduated with an MA in the Arts in 1931. Alexander enlisted in Dundee. Family plot in Bellaghy (St. Mary) Roman Catholic Churchyard. Castledawson WM. University of Glasgow RH

**+MILLAR, Samuel James**

RAFVR. Sergeant. 745254. Died 06/06/1941. Aged 20. 148 Sqn. Son of James and Mary R. Millar, of Carrickfergus, Co. Antrim. Alamein Memorial, Egypt, Column 243. 502 (Ulster) Squadron WM, St Anne's Cathedral, Belfast

**1942**

**+KELLEHER, Michael Joseph**

RAF. Sergeant (Flight Engineer). 568970. Died 06/06/1942. Aged 21. 149 Sqdn. Son of James and Anne Kelleher, of Portstewart. Adegem Canadian War Cemetery, Belgium

## **D DAY 1944**

### **+BASSETT, Anthony Hastings**

RNVR. Sub - Lieutenant (A). Died 06/06/1944. Age 21. Action off Normandy on D - Day. Memorial plaque in St.Columba's Parish Church, Omagh

### **+REYNOLDS, Edward Eli**

South Wales Borderers, 2nd Btn. Serjeant. 3907378. Died 06/06/1944. Aged 33. Husband of Elizabeth Reynolds, of Waterside, Londonderry. Bayeux War Cemetery, Calvados, France

### **+ROWE, William John**

Gordon Highlanders, 5/7th Btn. Private. 7011445. Died 06/06/1944. Aged 29. The Gordon Highlanders landed at Juno Beach between 1400hrs and 1700hrs, where they faced little opposition. Their landing craft, however, were in 5 to 6 feet of water as the men disembarked. The current swept Private Rowe beneath a nearby landing craft and he drowned before having a chance to make it ashore. Son of Thomas and Isabella Rowe, of Lisnaskea, Co. Fermanagh. Bayeux War Cemetery, Calvados, France

### **+YOUNG, James**

A.A.C. The Parachute Regiment, 9th Btn. Serjeant. 6977467. Died 06/06/1944. Aged 28. Son of John Joseph

and Mary Elizabeth Young, of Omagh. Ranville War Cemetery, Calvados, France

## **Royal Navy from Northern Ireland who served on D Day**

### **BROADBAND, nee Herivel, Sarah Elise Jamieson**

HMS Caroline. WRNS. 2nd.Off. BA QUB 1938. Aged 24, enrolled Belfast, 07/1940. Spent a year as a degaussing Wren at Whitehead. To RN College Greenwich for officer training. Year as Second Officer at Great Yarmouth minesweeping base. Posted as a Confidential Book Officer to FOIC Dover Command, HMS Watchful which was subject to shelling from the artillery at Gris Nez near Calais. Met officers of landing craft who came to collect secret codes and ciphers for D Day. Witnessed the craft setting off on D Day.

### **CAITHNESS, William John**

RN.1943 - 46. B 06/02/1924. HMS Queen of Kent 1943 - 45. Normandy landings. Son of Dr. W. Caithness who served RN World War 1. Coleraine Road, Portrush. Campbell College 2840.

### **COOKE, Wiliam**

RN. Wireless operator. William 'Billy' Cooke was a wireless operator in the Royal Navy. He enlisted aged just 17 in June 1943. He served in the D - Day landings, South East Asia, and Pacific. In the D - Day landings his vessel had been part of a flotilla of 12, ferrying heavy equipment and 20 men to the Normandy coast. They crossed amid bad weather and under cover of darkness, but he recalled that when they arrived it had been "chaos". "Between big ships firing and aircraft, I didn't know what was going on. I was just sitting there with my earphones on me," he said.

They then waited off the coast, although the boat became inoperable, took on water and began to drift, necessitating it being towed back into position. His most vivid memories were seeing dead bodies floating on the sea. "Utter chaos and mayhem," he recalled. At one point during the deployment he looked over the edge, and recalled "lots of dead bodies lying about, and floating about too". The craft, damaged on its first crossing, had to be towed

back to 'Blighty', but he then took part in no fewer than seven crossings to Omaha and Sword Beaches after repairs had been carried out. He was awarded the Croix de Guerre in 2014 when the French government recognised the surviving veterans.

After D-Day, Billy was sent for duty to the Far East and the British Pacific Fleet, returning to the UK in November 1945. He was demobbed in March 1946. Prior to joining the Navy, he had worked for a short time "on the railways" as a clerk at Newry GNR station. After his wartime service, he took up a post as school attendance officer with the then County Armagh Education Committee. By the time he retired, he had been promoted to Chief Attendance Officer with the Southern Education and Library Board. Billy Cooke was educated at his home village school, Newtownhamilton Public Elementary, after which he went to Newry 'Tech'. He married a local woman - he and Mrs Bertha Cooke were wed at Clarksbridge Presbyterian Church, three miles from Newtown, in 1954.

The greatest tragedy in their lives was in September 1975 when Mrs Cooke's father James McKee and her brother Ronnie were among the four victims murdered by the IRA in the Tullyvallen Orange Hall massacre. "We never got over it," said Mrs Cooke. "We just had to learn to live with it." Billy Cooke followed many fulfilling pursuits, not least music. He had a fine, melodic Irish tenor voice and sang in the former Richhill Male Voice Choir, then Portadown Male Voice Choir. He also sang in church choirs, earlier in Newtownhamilton and laterally in Tandragee Presbyterian Church Choir. They moved to Tandragee in 1981 and to Mullavilly six years later. He was an all-round musician – he could play the violin, cornet, trombone, piano and harp, and had been a member of Tullyvallen Silver Band, and a member of the Orange Lodge at Tullyvallen. Billy also loved the football scene, being a keen supporter of Portadown and Arsenal. He made the occasional trip to see the Gunners in their Highbury days. Arsenal's unbeaten season when they won the league (2003-04) was especially pleasing for Billy. He was a great conservationist, and thoroughly enjoyed gardening – from flowers to shrubs to vegetables.

Born in Newtownhamilton, the 89 year old was resident in Mullavilly, Co. Armagh at the time of his death in June 2015. Following a service at Tandragee Presbyterian Church, interment was at Newtownhamilton Presbyterian Churchyard. He remained a keen member of the Royal Navy Association and of Gilford Royal British Legion until his death. he had been to the 40th, 50th, and 60th anniversary commemorations of the D-Day landings in Normandy. (Portadown Times 24/06/2015, News Letter 18/07/2015).

### **GORE, WJ**

HMS Caroline. RNVR. CPO. (G.L. 1st Class). Joined Division in 1929, transferring to RN in 1936. 1939-1941 HMS Cormorant (Armed Merchant Cruiser), Cape of Good Hope and North Atlantic. Sunk in March 1941. 1941 - 1942 HMS Penelope, with Force 'K' in Mediterranean. Malta convoys. Wounded during air attack in Malta. After six months shore service joined HMS Bandit (Target towing tug) at Scapa Flow in 1943. Towed sections of Mulberry Harbour to Arromanches in 1944. 1944-1945 shore service at Fleet Air Arm station in West Africa. Left RN in 1946 and rejoined Ulster Division as Seaman Instructor until 1959, when he retired and became a shipkeeper on board Caroline.

### **HARDY, Alexander North**

RN. Lieutenant. Commanded HMS Valena, a minesweeper, used to sweep French beaches on 05/06/1944 in heavy weather prior to D Day. At the end of the war, he and the crew of HMS Valena found themselves in the Low Countries, where he took part in a VE-Day parade with Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands.

### **HENRY, James**

RM. CH/X114783. 48<sup>th</sup>. Btn. Lewis gunner. Landed Juno beach D Day. Wounded later. Ballyclare

### **McCOLGAN, Edward Carson**

HMS Caroline. RNVR. ACPO. BEM. Mobilised 09/1939 and drafted to RN Barracks, Portsmouth, where volunteered for special service training. In November to HMS Dunluce Castle at Scapa Flow as quartermaster. April 1941 drafted to ex U.S.IV. Tilman, then HMS

Wells, for service in Western Approaches and mine-laying North Atlantic. Later rated as Petty Officer and to Combined Operations at Hayling Island, thence to Landing Craft base on Clyde, where became coxswain of landing craft in No. 143 Flotilla. Subsequently went overseas to Mediterranean where took part in landing at Algiers, in Sicily, (where he was made LC Squadron coxswain), and Italy. Captain Colin Campbell, RN, writes about him 'He was the senior Petty Officer in a Landing Craft Flotilla which was singled out for special congratulation by General Montgomery and Rear-Admiral McGrigor for his work during the landings in Italy. When not carrying out amphibious operation this Petty Officer and his Flotilla were on shore in camp at the base of HMS Hamilcar which I commanded .... It is no exaggeration to say that, 'During the long time that Petty Officer McColgan was with me he displayed high qualities of ability, leadership and tact. I can confidently recommend him for any post of trust which requires energetic and tactful, yet firm leadership'. Awarded RNVR Long Service and Good Conduct Medal with Clasp and Two Rosettes. Coronation Medal. Served in the Ulster Division post-war. Brother of John McColgan.

**1946**

**+CUSHNIE, William Joseph**

Pioneer Corps . Private. 2075415. Died 06/06/1946. Aged 27. Son of Mr. and Mrs. William Cushnie, of The Maze, Co. Down; husband to Isabella Cushnie, of The Maze. Hamburg Cemetery

**VETERANS**

**CAREY, Bruce Thomson**

RNVR. Lt. Cdr. in Command, Minesweepers. Mentioned in despatches. Born 06/06/1902, son of J. W. Carey, Knockdene Park, Knock. Campbell College. Died Aberdeen.

**MOORE, William James “Billy”**

Served with 2nd Battalion of the Royal Ulster Rifles, landing on Sword Beach. See article above. Died 06/06/2009

**HUNTER, David James**

RNVR. Lieutenant. Hunter was born at Lodge Road, Coleraine on 07/04/1914 to Robert Hunter, Coal Merchant and Robina Hunter nee Kean.

On 01/03/1935 Hunter joined Northern Bank at Head Office. His address on joining the bank was Waterford House, Lodge Road, Coleraine.

On 05/05/1940 Hunter volunteered and enlisted into the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve (RNVR).

Hunter was ‘Called up for Active Service’ on 19/05/1941 and later gained a commission to become a Sub-Lieutenant.

Hunter was married at 1st Randalstown Presbyterian Church on 11/02/1943 to Miss Kathleen McRoberts Carson of The London House, Randalstown.

Following demobilisation, Hunter re-joined the bank at Head Office on 18th June 1946. Transfers followed to Falls (1947 - Accountant), Crumlin Road (1950 - Accountant), Ballymoney (1953 - Teller) and Head Office (1961 - Teller).

Hunter died on 06/06/1965. PRONI Wills records: "Hunter, David James of 19 Springwell Park Groomsport county Down representative died 6 June 1965 at Bangor Hospital Bangor county Down Probate Belfast 3 August to Kathleen McRoberts Hunter the widow. Effects £1080 2s."

## **THOMPSON, Michael (Mickey) Stanley Desalis**

North Irish Horse / Royal Irish Fusiliers. Captain. He was born in Walsall, Staffordshire, England on 27/09/1920 to Capt R A J Thompson (Army Officer) and Edith Marjorie Thompson nee Sutherland. In 1939 family was living at 11 Holland Park. Thompson was educated at Inst (RBAI) and featured in many cricket reports in the press. The Belfast News-Letter of 28th October 1938 reported that M S D Thompson was the head boy in Inst. He was still in school in 1939. On 15th May 1939 Thompson joined the Northern Bank at Head Office giving his address as 11 Holland Park, Belfast. Enlisted for Active Service on 06/06/1940. His various promotions were from Fusilier to Lance Corporal to Corporal to Cadet (via Sandhurst) to 2nd Lieutenant (184269) and then Captain in the Regular Army (1942) attached to the Royal Tank Regiment (RTR). The London Gazette records his later promotions as Lieutenant to Captain (1951) 184269 (North Irish Horse). Following the war, Thompson resumed work with the Northern Bank on 26/08/1946. Several appointments followed which concluded with Executor & Trustee (1960 - Pro- & then Sub-Manager), Head Office (1963) and Head Office (1966 - Assistant Chief Accountant). The Belfast News-Letter of 1st May 1954 reported that M S D Thompson was the 1st prize winner in the Diploma of Foreign Exchange examinations of the Institute of Bankers in Ireland. The following year,

the Belfast News-Letter of 18th May 1955 reported that he had won 2nd prize in the Executor & Trustee examinations. In 1958, Thompson had passed his final examination of the Corporation of Secretaries. The main image is of Thompson attending the 1974 Ex-Servicemen's Association dinner. Thompson married Miss Ross in September 1952. He retired on 31/10/1983.

# Every day is a Remembrance Day

*We will remember them*

## On this Day – June 6

**1915**

German Zeppelin raid on the English east coast. A reported 24 killed and 30 injured.

**1918**



36th (Ulster) Division Headquarters closes at Dragon Camp, the 36th (Ulster) Division Line is handed over to the 12th Infantry Division, Belgium Army. Major General Coffin VC Divisional Headquarters moves to Couthove Chateau outside Proven (Photo above).

The Battle of Belleau Wood begins as the U.S. Marine Corps attacks the Germans across an open field of wheat, suffering huge casualties. The battle lasts until 26.

The Germans capture the village and height of Bligny ( SW of Reims). The height is later retaken by the British.

## **1940**

Production of hundreds of household goods banned in Britain. All Germans and Austrians living in UK ordered to surrender their wireless sets.

Air raids along many parts of East Coast of England.

U-46 sinks the British armed merchant cruiser Carinthia off the west coast of Ireland.

German tanks in groups of 200 300 break through French line in two places on Somme front and Rommel's 7th Panzer Division advancing to the West of Amiens, penetrates 20 miles into French territory. During these breakthrough's the Germans suffer heavy losses at Amiens and Petonne.

## **1941**

Hitler issues a directive for the implementation of the Kommissarbefehl (Commissar Order) which calls for the summary execution of all Soviet political commissars attached to the Red Army. This order is tacitly disobeyed by most German army and corps commanders who deem it contrary to German military custom and tradition.

Act authorizing acquisition of idle foreign merchant ships by the US is approved.

## **1942**

A German bomb, undiscovered for 13 months explodes. 19 people are killed, more than 50 injured and 300 families made homeless.

German troops execute every male in the Czech village of Lidice (Bohemia) and then set fire to village in response to Heydrich's death.

## **1944**

Shortly after midnight on 6 June 1944, paratroops from the British 6th Airborne division landed near Pegasus Bridge in

Normandy.  
Operation  
Overlord had  
begun – the  
Allied  
invasion of  
German-  
occupied  
Europe.

**Admiral  
Ramsay in  
command  
for Dunkirk  
evacuation  
and D Day**

**Operation  
Neptune  
landed  
156,000  
Allied troops  
on 5  
beaches in**

**Normandy as part of the invasion of Europe under  
Operation Overlord. 6833 ships were used including  
5,300 warships and landing craft, 78% of which are  
British under Royal Navy, Adm. Ramsay**



Before dawn, the Allied Expeditionary Force of British, American, Canadian, Polish, and Free French troops begins Operation Overlord, the long-awaited invasion of France.

On D Day, Operation Neptune, landed 156,000 Allied troops on 5 beaches in Normandy as part of the invasion of Europe under Operation Overlord. 6833 ships were used including 5,300 warships and landing craft, 78% of which are British under Royal Navy Adm. Ramsay

By the end of July over one million troops were entrenched in Normandy and the war could be taken to Germany's front door.

The Royal Navy loses the Destroyers Wrestler and Svenner, which was Norwegian.

The French take Tivoli in Italy.

## **1945**

The Anniversary of D-Day, sees Eisenhower order a holiday for troops in Europe. Allied casualties from D-Day to VE-Day were 776,967 of which 141,590 were killed.

Naha airbase on Okinawa is now being used to hit Japan.

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

**[houstonmckelvey@mac.com](mailto:houstonmckelvey@mac.com)**

# remembrance ni

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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](mailto:houstonmckelvey@mac.com)

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