



remembrance ni

Eight crossings to D Day beaches by Tandragee sailor



D-Day survivor William Cooke is presented with his 70th anniversary medallion and certificate by Armagh Lord Mayor Robert Turner and by Colonel Arthur Reid.

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 the 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 By the time



The Normandy Memorial at Ver-Sur-Mer officially inaugurated by PM Theresa May in the presence of French President Emmanuel Macron on D Day anniversary 2019. It overlooks Gold beach and the remains of the Mulberry harbour at Arromanches.

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 Clarkesbridge 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 Newtown -hamilton 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 Naval 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).

Acknowledgment - 'Tandragee Remembers' by Richard Newell. Published by Graceland Print and Design 2009.

Roll of Honour – June 9

Representing their comrades who died on this day

1915

+HILL, John

Highland Light Infantry, 12th Btn. Private. 25357. Died 09/06/1916. Age 20. From Larne. Vermelles British Cemetery, France

1916

+DONNELLY, Robert

Royal Irish Fusiliers, 8th Btn. B Coy. Private. 21055. Died 09/06/1916. Age 36. Son of Daniel and Mary Donnelly, of

84, Brookfield St., Crumlin Rd., Belfast. Etretat Churchyard, France

+HILL, John

Highland Light Infantry, 12th Btn. Private. 25357. Died 09/06/1916. Age 20. Born in Ayr, he lived in Ballyclare and enlisted in Larne. His brother Samuel died from tuberculosis whilst serving with the Royal Irish Rifles on 22/10/1915. Son of Mrs Elizabeth (nee Graham) Hill, McClean's Entry, North End, Ballyclare. His mother later re-married. She and William Baxter married in St Anne's Cathedral, Belfast on 24/12/1917. Vermelles British Cemetery, Pas de Calais, France. Ballyclare WM. St John's C of I RH, Ballyclare

+PORTER, J

Royal Irish Fusiliers, 4th Btn. Private. 3744. Died 09/06/1916. Husband of Annie Porter, of 42, Crosby St., Belfast. Belfast City Cemetery

+WALKER, Thomas

Cameronians (Scottish Rifles), 10th Btn. Private. 22183. Died 09/06/1916. Age 21. Son of Mary and the late William John Walker, of 399, Woodstock Rd., Belfast. Vermelles British Cemetery, France

1917

+ANDERSON, Joseph

Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers. 11th Btn. Lance Corporal. 14015. Died 09/06/1917. Age 51. Son of Joseph and Matilda Anderson, of Ballinamallard, Co. Fermanagh. Hazebrouck Communal Cemetery, France

+CRAIG, William

Captain. HMT Harbury. Died 09/06/1917. Sunnyside, Antrim Road, Belfast. Fortwilliam Park - PCI RH. Family memorial, Balmoral Cemetery, Belfast

+KANE, John

Royal Irish Rifles. 15th Btn. Corporal. 209. Died 09/06/1917. Age 26. Son of Joseph and Annie Kane, of 95, Main St., Portrush. Longuenesse (St Omer) Souvenir Cemetery, France

+McMULLAN, Joseph Andrew

Australian Infantry, 18th Btn. Private. 5639. Died a POW on 09/06/1917. He was the son of William McMullan, a blacksmith, and Ellen Crawford, Lisnahay, Cairncastle, near Larne. They had three children - Joseph Andrew was born 22/11/1891). He joined the AIF on the 6 April 1916 at Cootamundra in the fertile South West Slopes region of New South Wales, Australia, and in his will he said he lived at Downside, near Wagga Wagga. He was then about 23 years old, 6' 1 ½ " tall, single, and employed as a labourer. He left Australia from Sydney aboard HMAT Euripides on 09/09/1916 and disembarked in Plymouth on 26/10/1916. He went to Rollestone Camp, Salisbury Plain and the 5th Training Battalion. His training completed, he boarded the Princess Clementine at Folkestone and arrived in France on the 24/01/1917, joining the 18th Battalion thereafter on the 15 February. He was reported missing in action on 03/05/1917 and later the Australians received a note which read as follows: 'Austr. Sold. McMullan, J A (5639), Australier, am 9.6.17 bei Queant gefallen' (Australian soldier J A McMullan, 5639, Australian, fell at Queant on

9/6/1917). He had been wounded and recovered from the battlefield by the Germans but he subsequently died of his wounds while a POW in their hands. William James wrote a letter in 1922 stating he was the 'eldest surviving brother' and that his 'father and mother' were deceased. He gave his address as No 1 Halloran Street, Lilyfield, Sydney. Villers-Bretonneux Memorial. Cairncastle PC WM

+McMANUS, Thomas

Royal Dublin Fusiliers, 9th Btn. Private. 27681. Died 09/06/1917. Age 20. Brother of Mrs. Betty Hughes, of 24, Penrose St., Rugby Avenue, Belfast. Ypres (Menin Gate) Memorial, Belgium

+MORELAND, Robert

Royal Army Medical Corps, 110th Field Amb. Lance Corporal. 44141. Died 09/06/1917. Age 23 years old. Son of Robert and Mary Moreland, of 54, Sydney St. West, Belfast. Lonuenesse (St Omer) Souvenir Cemetery, France

+SMYTH, William Smyth

12th Bn. Royal Irish Rifles. Rifleman. 1782. Died as a Prisoner of War at Ruckhiem, Germany, 09/06/1917. Aged 26. Born Ballycastle. Married. Lived at 20 Church Street, Port Glasgow, Niedierzwehren German

1918

+CAIRNS, Isaac

Royal Irish Rifles. 10th Btn. Rifleman. 14181. Died 09/06/1917. Age 25. Son of James and Agnes Cairns, of 53, Jerusalem St., Belfast. Dundonald cemetery

+TYRELL, Walter Alexander

RNAS. Petty Officer. 32nd Squadron RAF. MC. Died 09/06/1918. He was educated at RBAI (Inst) and the Belfast Municipal Technical Institution. He was a member of the QUB OTC and was working as an apprentice motor engineer when he commissioned into the Royal Flying Corps in July 1917. He served in the RNAS (Armoured Car Section) as a Petty Officer from 26/12/1914 to 24/11/1915. During this time, he spent 8 months in France and suffered an injury, when an armoured car crushed his foot. Subsequently he used a specially made boot.

Alexander was Ireland's fourth ranked air ace, with 17 victories. The first was on 30/10/1917 over Passchendaele, the last two being at 1845 hrs and 1850 hrs on 06/06/1918. He was awarded the Military Cross, the citation for which read: "For conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty. On one day this officer attacked two enemy triplanes, destroying one and driving down the other out of control. After this he was attacked by two other machines, one of which he forced to land, taking the occupants prisoners. On various other occasions, he has destroyed or driven down out of control enemy machines."

One particular victory, his second, on 11/11/1917 is described here: "Three 32 Sqn DH5s flown by 2nd Lts Howson, W A Tyrrell and Claydon, were engaged on an OP. At 1000 over Westroosbeke, Clayton & Tyrrell first intercepted an Albatros with a yellow and green fuselage and yellow nose. Clayton was forced to pull out of the fight with a gun jam, but Tyrrell carried on the attack. The German began a staggering flutter in a downward direction. As the pilot attempted to pull the stricken Albatros out of the dive, Tyrrell fired again, his bullets striking the pilot's head

and the instrument panel in front of him. The Albatros reared upwards before spinning down again. Tyrrell lost sight of his quarry at 300 feet as it fell through and below other circling German aircraft - it was too dangerous to follow. There no German pilot fatalities on this day. Nevertheless, Tyrrell added this 'out of control' to his score."

Alexander was killed, at the age of 19, while flying his Fouquierolles SE5a biplane. He was brought down by enemy machine gun fire from the trenches. Born 23/08/1898. Son of John Tyrrell and Jeanie Tyrrell (nee Todd) of Fairview Buildings, Crumlin Road, Belfast, and later Ballyholme. Beauvais Communal Cemetery, Oise, France. First Bangor PCI RH. Bangor WM. RBAI WM

1940

+ANDERSON, John

RN. HMS Glorious. Able Seaman. D/JX 148096. Died 08/06/1940. Age 18. While evacuating British aircraft from Norway in June, the ship was sunk by the German battleships Scharnhorst and Gneisenau in the North Sea with the loss of over 1,200 lives. John had joined the Royal Navy in 1936, aged 14. Son of William John and Isabella Anderson, of Shore Street, Killyleagh, Co. Down. Plymouth Naval Memorial, Panel 37

+CARROTHERS, T

Royal Artillery. Gunner. 458599. Died 09/06/1940. Dundonald cemetery

+JAMESON, John

Royal Artillery. Gunner. 1474572. Died 09/06/1940. Aged 30.
8 HAA Regiment. 23 Bty. Son of Samuel and Alice
Jameson, of Belfast, Northern Ireland; husband to Sarah
Jameson, of Belfast. Pont-de-L'Arche Communal Cemetery,
Eure, France. Regimental WM and RH, St Anne's
Cathedral, Belfast

+REA, William

Royal Artillery. Gunner. 1476657. Died 09/06/1940. Aged 22.
8 HAA Regiment. 23 Bty. Son of Patrick Rea, and of Ellen
Rea, of Belfast. Pont-de-L'Arche Communal Cemetery,
Eure, France. Regimental WM and RH, St Anne's
Cathedral, Belfast

1942

+McCAGHEY, Harold Abraham

RCAF. Flight Lieutenant. C/2076. Died 09/06/1942. Aged 38.
Son of William J. McCaghey and Jean McCaghey, Belfast;
Husband to Elva M. McCaghey, Ancaster. Ancaster
(Bethesda United Church) Cemetery, Shaver Family Plot,
Canada

+O'NEILL, Charles

RAF. Sergeant (Air Gunner). 613758. Died 09/06/1942.
Aged 22. 83 Sqdn. Son of Edward and Mary Ann O'Neill,
Armagh. Reichswald Forest War Cemetery, Nordrhein-
Westfalen, Germany

1943

+ROBINSON, William Arthur

RAFVR. Sergeant. 1504635. Died 09/06/1943. Aged 22. 619 Sqdn. Son of Joseph and Barbara E. Robinson, of Belfast. Runnymede Memorial, Panel 163. QUB WM

1944

Allied forces continue to land a considerable number of men and equipment in Normandy. Facing them, in the British area of responsibility, the Germans positioned three divisions northwest of Caen: the 21st Panzer Division, the 12th Panzer Division and the Panzer-Lehr.

+BURNS, Gerald Joseph

RAFVR. Sergeant (Air Gunner). 1796555. Died 09/06/1944. Aged 24. 44 Sqdn. Son of Hugh and Agnes Burns of Belfast. Moringny-Champigny Communal Cemetery, Essongy, France

+HALFPENNY, John James

Royal Ulster Rifles, 2nd Btn. Rifleman. 7015482. Died 09/06/1944. Aged 27. Son of Frank and Annie Halfpenny, of Ligoniel, Co. Antrim. La Deliverande War Cemetery, Douvres, Calvados, France

+HOEY, Robert

Army Catering Corps. Private. 7012466. Attached to 1st (A) Battalion. Died 09/06/1944. Age 28. Died on the day his twin sons were born. He was the company cook in C Company. Killed by enemy mortar fire on 09/06/1944, while cooking food for the Company in a barn. The building was hit by a mortar bomb, he was not wearing his helmet at the time and was killed instantly by shrapnel. Robert Hoey Junior operated a coal business in the Bangor area before he joined the Army in 1932 and he served in various parts of

the world including India. Robert Hoey and Elizabeth Telford were married on 20/03/1943 in Ballygilbert Presbyterian Church. From Carnalea, County Down, he was the son of Robert and Elizabeth Hoey. During the First World War Robert Hoey Senior served with the Royal Irish Rifles. Ranville War Cemetery, Calvados, France. Bangor WM, Ballygilbert Presbyterian Church RH

+JACKSON, George Alexander

Veterans Guard of Canada. Lieutenant. MC. MM. Died 09/06/1944. Age 57. George emigrated to Canada. He enlisted with the Canadian Mounted Rifles in 1915. He was later commissioned into the British Columbia Regiment and served throughout the war, being awarded the Military Medal and the Military Cross. His family had a remarkable record of bravery in action in WW1. A brother Corporal A H Jackson won the DCM and the MM. He was a missionary in India and curate of Ballymacarrett Parish, Belfast. Another brother Sergeant J E Jackson serving with the Royal Engineers was killed during the final advance on 28/09/1918. Yet another brother Sergeant Victor Jackson served in Canadian forces and was wounded. Another brother Corporal David Jackson, who was in fact too young to serve, was in the RAF. Son of Joseph and Alice Jackson of Coragh, Loughgall; husband to Esther Jackson, of White Horse, Yukon. Mountain View Cemetery, Vancouver

+KEVILLE, Patrick

Suffolk Regiment, 1st Btn. Lieutenant. 207709. Died 09/06/1944. Age 26. B.A. Queen's University, Belfast. The First Battalion, The Suffolk Regiment, was charged with



Sergeant W Hardy, 1st Battalion of the Royal Ulster Rifles (6th Airborne Division) receives the Military Medal for Gallantry in the Field from General Sir Bernard Montgomery. Sergeant Hardy was decorated for his part in the Airborne Divisions actions during 5/6 June 1944. US06-743SP

following two assault battalions whose job it was to establish an exit from the Normandy beaches. Son of Timothy P. and Charlotte Helena Keville, of Lurgan. La Deliverande War Cemetery, Douvres, France. Queen's University WM

+LANE, Benjamin William

Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers. 2nd Btn. Lieutenant. 145117. Died 09/06/1943. Age 23. Son of Capt. William Aubrey Lane and Gertrude Leona Lane, of Limavady. Damascus Commonwealth War Cemetery, Syria

+MEARNS, Herbert

Royal Ulster Rifles, 1st Btn. Corporal. 14412609. Died 09/06/1944. Aged 19. He was killed in action during enemy attacks on the Battalion on 09/06/1944 at Longueval. He had originally served in the General Service Corps. From Coleraine, County Londonderry. He was the son of Margaret Mearns. Ranville Cemetery, Calvados, France

+McILROY, James

Royal Ulster Rifles, 1st Btn. Rifleman. 7012990. Died 09/06/1944. Aged 30. Mortally wounded while serving in D Company at Longueval on 09/06/1944. From Belfast, he joined the Battalion in May 1943. Son of Henry and Sarah McIlroy and husband to Nancy McIlroy of Belfast. Ranville Cemetery, Calvados, France

+PATTERSON, John

Royal Ulster Rifles, 2nd Btn. C Coy. Rifleman. 7020205. Died 09/06/1944 struck by shrapnel during fierce fighting at Cambes-en-Plaine. Aged 32. Brother served in RAF. Son of John and Elizabeth Patterson, husband to Florence Paterson Summerhill St., Belfast. Cambes-en-Plaine War Cemetery, Calvados, France

+PATTON, Richard George

Royal Ulster Rifles. 2nd Btn. Rifleman. 6979411. Died 09/06/1944. Enlisted with the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers when not quite 16 years of age. He was sent to France after war broke out and was sent home after a few months as he was found to be too young. He served at home for a time and transferred to the Royal Ulster Rifles. He landed at Sword Beach in Normandy with his battalion. He was wounded by shrapnel three days later at Cambes-en-Plaine. Son of Mrs Patton and the late Mr A Patton of Killylea, Armagh. Cambes-en-Plaine War Cemetery, France

+PROSSER, Reginald Henry James

Royal Ulster Rifles. 1st Btn. 21 Platoon, D Coy. Rifleman. 7020918. Died 09/06/1944. Aged 21. Son of Henry and Florence Prosser, of Southall, Middlesex. Bayeux War Memorial, Calvados, France

+RICE, William John

Royal Ulster Rifles, 2nd Btn. A Coy. Rifleman. 7011646. Died 09/06/1944 during fighting at Cambes Wood. Aged 46. 13 years served. He landed on Sword Beach on D-Day. Brother served in Royal Navy. Son of Thomas Rice and Elizabeth Rice (née Bingham); husband to Mrs J. Rice, Arkwright St., Belfast. Cambes-en-Plaine War Cemetery, Cambes, Normandy, France

+SCOTT, William John

Royal Ulster Rifles, 2nd Btn. 7011203. Died 09/06/1944. Cambes-en-Plaine War Cemetery, France.

+WILLIS, Norman

1st Btn. Royal Ulster Rifles. 21 Platoon, D Coy. Rifleman, No. 7017941. Died 09/06/1944 at Longueval. Aged 23. Joined the Battalion in May 1943. From Belfast, he was the son of James and Elizabeth Willis. Ranville War Cemetery, Calvados, France

Every day is a Remembrance Day

We will remember them

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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