



## remembrance ni

### King George VI's D-Day speech called nation to prayer

Part of King George VI's speech on D-Day calling the nation to prayer:

'That we may be worthily matched with this new summons of destiny, I desire solemnly to call my people to prayer and dedication. We are not unmindful of our own shortcomings, past and present. We shall ask not that God may do our will, but that we may be enabled to do the will of God: and we



dare to believe that God has used our Nation and Empire as an instrument for fulfilling his high purpose.

I hope that throughout the present crisis of the liberation of Europe there may be offered up earnest, continuous and widespread prayer. We who remain in this land can most effectively enter into the sufferings of subjugated Europe by prayer, whereby we can fortify the determination of our sailors, soldiers and airmen who go forth to set the captives free.

The Queen joins with me in sending you this message. She well understands the anxieties and cares of our womenfolk at this time and she knows that many of them will find, as she does herself, fresh strength and comfort in such waiting upon God. She feels that many women will be glad in this way to keep vigil with their menfolk as they man the ships, storm the beaches and fill the skies

.  
At this historic moment surely not one of us is too busy, too young or too old to play a part in a nationwide, perchance a worldwide, vigil of prayer as the great crusade sets forth. If from every place of worship, from home and factory, from men and women of all ages and many races and occupations, our intercessions rise, then, please God, both now and in a future not remote, the predictions of an ancient Psalm may be fulfilled: "The Lord will give strength unto his people: the Lord will give his people the blessing of peace."

## **Preparation for War - Service with the Royal Ulster Rifles**

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## **Edward Cadden recalls his father's service -**

My father was born in June 1902 and named Edward after the newly crowned King.

He joined the 2nd Battalion of the Royal Irish Rifles in 1921 and the Battalion was posted overseas. They sat in the troopship in Golden Horn Straits for 2 weeks waiting for politicians to decide whether to invade Turkey following Kemal Pasha's expulsion of Greek occupation troops.

Then to Egypt for 2 years in support of the civil power with a successful spell of ceremonial duties at the coronation of King Faud.

## **In India the regiment became the Royal Ulster Rifles**

To Poona in India where in 1927 the regiment became the Royal Ulster Rifles and with full military honours a coffin containing R.I.R. rubber stamps, headed paper and shoulder badges was laid to rest in Wellington Barracks with a headstone inscribed R.I.R. R.I.P. R.U.R.

A short leave to Belfast in 1928 where he married my mother Jane and my sister Jean was born in Poona in December 1929.

After an unpleasant stint in steamy Madras the Battalion sailed for home in 1932 but the men were disembarked in



the Sudan to prevent Mussolini extending his ambitions after conquest of Abyssinia. The enforced tour laste

## **Catterick and Palestine**

Just over 2 years in the UK at Catterick and the Isle of Wight then off to Palestine in 1937 for active service against the ancestors of the 21st Century Palestine Freedom Fighters.

In the 16th Infantry Brigade under the command of Brigadier Bernard Law Montgomery the Battalion developed novel tactics in Galilee of highly mobile ground forces with close air support by RAF units commanded by Group Captain Arthur Harris all this was relevant to World War 2 for without the long tempering of experience for officers, N.C.O.S. and senior riflemen the unit could not have stood up to the campaigning of that war.

On return to the UK in 1939 it was clear that war with Germany was coming and a massive refit was landed on the

unit with my Dad as R.Q.M.S. (Regimental Quartermaster Sergeant) and experienced weapons instructor in the midst of it. The personal uniform and equipment which had remained virtually unchanged since 1908, with the addition of a steel helmet and gas respirator in WW1, was all changed. In came the short blouse battledress and a new pattern of webbing equipment.

Many new vehicles were added to the unit's equipment including tracked Bren-gun carriers. New wireless equipment required new specialists and new operational methods. The light machine gun — the Lewis was replaced with a Czech weapon for which Enfield had got a production licence just before Hitler added the rest of Czechoslovakia to the Sudetenland.

### **The Bren arrived in quantity but without instruction manuals**

The BRNO-Enfield — the Bren arrived in quantity but without instruction manuals. It was entirely different to the Lewis so Dad and other instructors had to teach themselves how it worked by rule of thumb and experience. A rather useless anti-tank weapon appeared also - the Boyes rifle. Supported by a bipod this had a magazine of 5 half-inch calibre steel bullets which in theory would penetrate a tank's armour and ricochet around inside causing havoc to the crew.

Experienced men were posted off to help form new units and replacements had to be trained from scratch. Dad at one stage had to teach the laying of barbed wire entanglements with balls of twine bought in Woolworth.





## The Phoney War

The newly promoted Major General Montgomery managed to get most of the units from his 16 infantry brigade incorporated in his new command — 3rd Division. The main defensive problem was spotted as soon as the division arrived in France. The gap from the end of the Maginot Line to the coast along the Belgian border the Rifles were based in Tourcoing and like the rest of the Division busied themselves with training and with construction of prepared positions of trenches, sangars, barbed wire and mines to oppose any advance from Belgium.

My Dad's hard work was lightened (I hope) by my birth on 7 January 1940 in Belfast. Their commander's puritanical, even Cromwellian style of command led to 3rd Division's proudly borne nickname of "Monties Ironsides" my dad received leave to inspect his new son in late spring and

headed back to France just in time for the German offensive.

Just before the crucial moment Montgomery was moved off to command a new division and hand-over take-over added to the confusion.

The rapid collapse of Dutch and Belgian armed forces caused the Division to be moved out of the prepared positions and rushed forward to hold the Eastern border of Belgium. The German tactics were on a much grander scale those practiced by 16 Infantry Brigade in Palestine. Before fresh troops could replace 3rd Division the German armour punched through Tourcoing and did not stop before reaching Bayonne and a French surrender. The rifles and their Scots and other comrades found themselves not part of a coordinated defence but a lonely rearguard to slow the Germans and permit evacuation of the B.E.F. from Dunkirk and adjacent areas.

**R.U.R. were defending Louvain, or more properly since it is a Flemish area Leuven.**

Fortunately German armour was engaged elsewhere but the infantry fighting was fierce. At one stage opposite platforms of the railway terminal were occupied by Germans and by the Rifles. An enterprising Bren-gunner to make the Germans believe defence was heavier would fire a magazine then run along the pedestrian subway and fire a second magazine.

Ammunition ran low and at nightfall Dad set off with transport to fetch supplies from the rear depot. Arriving there he found R.Q.M.S.'s from other units in frustration because

the depot had decamped. Dad asked an impolite major where supplies could be found and was told the coast. A conference with the other unit reps. and Dad decided to lead a dash to the coast. The major butted in to remark that it was thought the Germans had cut the road to the coast. "How can we get there?" asked Dad "fight your way through" snapped the major Dad thought this comic as his detachment had one Bren and an anti-tank rifle with only 2 rounds of armour piercing. However Dad and the Rifles in the lead they reached the coast overloaded with ammo and headed back. The ammunition was delivered safely to Leuven and some years later Dad found one of the W.O.s who had followed his lead from another unit had got a M.B.E. for the effort. The Rifles regarded such action as Dad's as par for the course in their outfit.

It became clear that the holding action might result in the destruction of the Battalion so Dad was given a party of specialists and long-service N.C.O.s essential to the creation of new unit and told to get them to G.B..

They reached the beaches at Bray dunes near Dunkirk where some troops had abandoned their personal weapons and 40mm Bofors anti-aircraft guns sat unmanned. Dad got every rifleman to collect a second rifle and the Bren-gunner to pick up a second Bren. He acquired a service Smith and Wesson revolver which he had for the rest of the war.

They were lifted off safely by the Ramsgate Lifeboat with their feet dry and taken to a "Sword" class destroyer off-shore which took them to England.



The 2nd R.U.R. was not destroyed but with other units of 3 Division fought back to the coast and were evacuated depleted but unbroken.

## **Becoming a Gentleman by Royal Commission**

Montgomery instead of taking a break came back and assisted with the resurrection his “Ironsides” and then headed off to a new command.

Apart from replacement of equipment lost in Belgium some new items arrived including some Thompson sub machine guns from the U.S.A.. Efforts had to be made to create command structures and defensive positions to deal with the anticipated invasion. Dad got some leave to visit us in Belfast but was kept busy through late summer and early autumn.

Then he was commissioned as a Lieutenant. A W.O.I. when commissioned skipped 2nd lieutenant otherwise he would be paid less than his existing grade when promoted.

A course at O.T.U. to teach Dad techniques of command, traditions and military law and manners of which he knew more than his instructors.

His first posting was as Lieutenant Quartermaster to a training depot for the Auxiliary Territorial Service, the predecessor of the Womens Royal Army Corps. These young women did not go into the front-line like their 21st century descendants but did mechanical, signalling and admin tasks to free up men for front-line service.

We joined him in the depot's base town Dorchester in an underoccupied home requisitioned in part as married quarters in 1942 we experienced our first bombing as a united family.

## **London**

When we arrived in late 1942 at our requisitioned quarters in Edgware shared with the Jewish owners, the Roes, the great blitz was in a lull. The Luftwaffe needed all the bombers it could get in Russia and the North African campaigns called for even more. The pattern was isolated "nuisance raids" by high altitude bombers or low-level sorties on the south-east by single or handfuls of fighter-bombers. The RAF as well as night-raids by heavy bombers was attacking targets in France and the Low Countries by day with fighters and light bombers.

The USAAC was also testing the water with increasing strength there were municipal air raid shelters, the tube doubled as an air raid shelter and schools had mass shelters for pupils homeowners could get two types of prefab shelter. The Morrison for use in a well braced indoor area or the Anderson to be inserted in a hole in the garden. Surplus Andersons became coal-houses for post war prefab houses

## **The London Irish Rifles - a TA Battalion affiliated to the RUR**

Dad was promoted captain and posted as Q.M. of the London Irish Rifles. This was a T.A. Battalion affiliated to the R.U.R. and drawing recruits from expatriates living in

London. It like other T.A. units was supposed to provide an immediate war reserve for regular units. Over 3 years of war and the London Irish had not been got into action. My Dad and a batch of “old sweat” N.C.O.s and officers were posted in to give a kick start.

The main trouble was the shared experiences of members of the regular units with hard oversea postings and awkward operational contexts did not apply to the re-cycled civilians of the T.A.. There was no esprit de corps. One sample may illustrate the symptoms of a general malaise. On a kit inspection Dad found that a “rifleman” had sold off all negotiable items of his personal kit. Worn-out uniform items were commonly used as cleaning materials or waste containers. The miscreant presented a plausible assembly of spare clothing made from washed and ironed cleaning rags and cardboard. He had sold all the brass fittings for scrap and substituted dummies made of tin foil.

The Battalion got sorted out and was lined up for service in North Africa. Near departure a company commander developed an illness diagnosed as Plumbum Ostillendum. My Dad was about to be made Acting Company Commander and posted out when the authorising office pointed out that he was past the age-limit for active front-line service. Despite the false starts the unit stood the horrid pace well in North Africa and Italy.

**Top Secret**

Mum, my sister and I were posted back to Belfast when the London Irish Rifles departed because Dad was posted as a Q.M. of a secret base at Westward Ho near Bideford in

Devon — the combined operations experimental establishment. The beaches there were similar to those in Normandy and tidal conditions, sea-levels and cliff features were also similar. A mixture of technical experts from all 3 services was gathered there with representation of the U.S.A. and other allies.

Much of the supply of specialised landing craft was tied up in the U.S. Pacific campaigns. The intended stockpile for Normandy was to be further depleted for landings in Italy.

Devices experimented with at Westward Ho were amphibious versions of Sherman and Churchill tanks, rocket firing landing craft, a DUKW amphibious lorry fitted with a fire brigade extending ladder to scale shoreline cliffs. A total disaster (fortunately without casualties) a huge rocket propelled wheel to explode minefields. The rockets fired out of sequence, the brute tipped over and proceeded to whirl towards the rapidly scattering spectators.

More mundane but successful machines were amphibious cable layers, Bailey Bridge carriers and bulldozers. A scale trial was made along the coast of the Mulberry Harbour.

One of Dad's missions involved a flight in an R.A.F. Proctor liaison aircraft from Chivenor to Pembrey to check the functioning of a trial laying of P.L.U.T.O. the pipeline under the ocean. This in full scale service would pump fuel from England to Normandy.

The Q.M. of such a unit had to find often at short notice a myriad of components — some of them in no military inventory.

## Lieutenant Commander Neville Shute Norway

One of the engineering experts was Lieutenant Commander Neville Shute Norway. He had created the Airspeed Aircraft Company which had supplied the King's flight with its first aircraft. The company's Oxford twin engined trainer was one of the mainstays of R.A.F. wartime training systems, his company had been taken over by De Havilland.

He was an author of Novels already by 1944 using his first two names Neville Shute. In a famous post-war novel "No Highway" he foreshadowed the Comet Airliner disasters with a fictional airliner plagued by metal fatigue.

The inventiveness of the elite personnel was shown in more mundane ways. Childrens toys were almost unobtainable in 1944 and my Dad's sergeant produced toys from scrap packaging and other materials.

I received a model of the French Battleship "Richelieu" usable on a wheeled frame or to float in the bath. There was a model also of a seep, and amphibious jeep and a long-lived Sherman tank model. Scrap packaging celluloid, .303 rifle chargers, washers and tail ends of brass and iron rods were incorporated and painting came from the dregs of paint left from finishing touches to the amphibious equipment.

A major pre D-Day disaster happened near the combined operations experimental establishment at Westward Ho when US troops practising amphibious landings were intercepted by E-Boats and suffered heavy casualties. The unit did not close with the success of D-Day for many rivers

needed to be crossed before V.E. Day and Seaborne and Riverborne operations were necessary in the Far East.

With war's end Dad decided that our family had been separated too often and a peacetime career even as a major would not help the development of a teenage daughter and a six year old son with postings to foreign parts. He decided to retire, take his pension and supplement it with a civilian job.

In 1946 a special job centre was established in Belfast for demobilising servicemen. Dad was delighted to find his neighbour in the queue was an N.C.O. who had served under his command. They chatted of times gone by and recent developments until they reached the parting of the ways. One lane was signed "Officers' Posts" and the other "Other Ranks' Posts". They both emerged from their respective lanes as temporary Clerical Assistants Grade II in the N.I. Civil Service.

## **The Rifleman**

Regardless of any rank he may achieve subsequently a Rifleman is always a Rifleman. He is part of an elite unit who taught the rest of the army how to make war. His full dress uniform is dark green and his badges and buttons are black. He marches at 120 paces a minute and does not change gear going up hill. Regardless of drill practices by mere infantry with whatever firearm is current a rifleman shoulders arms never slopes arms and he marches past with the weapon at the trail.



No matter what other units call it a Rifleman's bayonet is a sword and he fixes swords and never fixes bayonets. He must never be mistaken for a Light Infantry man who is merely a copy of the French Tirailleurs. Each Rifleman is an individual fighting unit which will operate on its own whether support is near or not. Before commandos, parachute regiments or S.A.S. the Rifleman had broken away from the lumpen proletariat of infantry of the line.

Indeed in the Royal Ulster Rifles one Battalion went into action on D-Day as airborne troops and the other on foot in traditional style.

In ceremonial Rifles have no colours their battle honours are on the drums of the band. When the band is displaying old sweats may be singing *sotto voce* -

"You may talk about your Queen's Guards  
Scots greys and all  
You may talk about your kilties and the  
forty second TWA  
But of all the world's great heroes  
under the Queen's command  
the Royal Ulster Rifles are the  
terror of the Land!"

"Quis Seperabit" the motto of the Knights of St Patrick is completed in original by "From the Love of God". For a rifleman the unwritten follow on is "From love of my regiment."

Acknowledgments - The BBC Ni's People's War site and Edward Cadden



**Fontenay-le-Pesnel War Cemetery contains the graves of men who died in the fighting to the west and south-west of Caen in June-July 1944.**

## **Roll of Honour - June 10**

*Representing their comrades who died on this day*

**1915**

**+BAILEY, Samuel McCutcheon**

RN. ERA II. M11615. HMTB No. 10. Died 10/06/1915. Aged 22. Enrolled 19/01/1915 for hostilities. In Pembroke II,

Undaunted and Acteon (TB10). Born Lurgan 02/07/1897. Son of William and Minnie Bailey, Mourneview St., Portadown; husband to Martha Bailey, Montague St., Portadown. Chatham Naval Memorial, Panel 10. St Mark's Church, Portadown. Portadown WM. ADM 188/1041/11615

**+McCLINTOCK, James**

Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers. 3rd Btn. Private. 3957. Died at home 10/06/1915. Son of John McClintock, 34, Nailor's Row, Londonderry. Diamond WM.

**1916**

**+KIRKPATRICK, William John**

107th Coy. Machine Gun Corps. Private. 19558. Died 10/06/1916. Aged 26. Enlisted, Belfast. Born, Spoutfields, Coleraine. Son of William and Margaret Jane Kirkpatrick. Husband to Elizabeth, Larne. Authuille Cemetery

**+QUINN, W G**

Royal Irish Rifles, 8th Btn. Rifleman. 8/12406. Died 10/06/1916. Authuille Military Cemetery, Authuille, Somme, France

**1918**

**+CONROY, Robert**

Royal Irish Rifles, 9th Btn. Rifleman. 14270. Later transferred to Labour Corps (109269 Pte.) Died at home 10/06/1918. Born in Dungannon. Holme (Holy Trinity) Churchyard, Westmorland

**1919**

**+TODD, James**

Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, Depot. Lance Corporal. 17745.  
Died 10/06/1919. Age 29. The first definite record for James is in 1912 when he married Elizabeth Jackson in Ballygilbert Presbyterian Church on the 04/11/1912. He gives his father's name as James Todd, a labourer. James had been working for Mr. William M'Bride, a general merchant in Central Avenue, Bangor, when he enlisted on the 18th August 1914. He joined the 6th Service Battalion, Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, and was stationed in Portobello Barracks in Dublin. The battalion moved to England in April 1915 before embarking for the Dardanelles landing in Gallipoli on the 7th August 1915.

An obituary for James in the *Herald and Co Down Independent* records that he "... was wounded at Achi Baba on 9th August, 1915. After recovery at home he joined the 29th Division in France, where he was wounded in January, 1918. He was discharged as unfit for further service through wounds in September, 1918, and on returning home was employed by Mr. R. J. Woods, Princetown Lodge, Bangor." James never recovered from his injuries and took seriously ill in June 1919 being admitted to Bangor Hospital where he died on the 10/06/1919, the cause of death recorded as "Chronic Nephritis 2 years and Uraemic convulsions 2 days".

His obituary further records that James was "... laid to rest on Thursday afternoon, with military honours, in the New

Cemetery. The firing party was composed of men of the Somerset Regiment, and behind the coffin, which was draped with a Union Jack and floral tributes, there marched the brethren of L.O.L. 1091, Crawfordsburn and members of the Bangor Branch, Comrades of the Great War. Despite the fact that a thunderstorm, accompanied by heavy rain, prevailed, there was a large muster of the general public." Bangor Cemetery

**1940**

**+BASKETFIELD, Wilfred George**

Northamptonshire Regiment, 2nd Btn. Private. 5883405. Died 10/06/1940. Aged 25. Father of John Wilfred and Mary Claire Basketfield; husband to Mrs Mary Frances Basketfield (formerly Donnelly), of Ballybrolly, Armagh. Dunkirk Memorial, Nord, France

**+FEELY, Charles Patrick**

Royal Engineers, 213 Army Field Coy. Sapper. 1895441. Died 10/06/1940. Aged 37. Son of Roderick and. Agnes Feely, of Strabane. Totes Communal Cemetery, Seine-Maritime, France

**+HOLT, James Henry**

Royal Ulster Rifles, 6th Btn. Rifleman. D/25043. Died 10/06/1940 at the Military Hospital at Stranmillis College, Belfast. Aged 50. Born in Cheshire, England and served in Northern Ireland in the Home Defence battalion. He lived at 8 Kensington Street, Belfast. Belfast City Cemetery

## 1942

### **+ADAMS, George**

RAFVR. Aircraftman 1st Class. 1500291. Died 10/06/1942. Aged 19. Son of Mary Adams and stepson of Thomas McIntyre, of Mosside, Co. Antrim. Truro (Terrace Hill) Cemetery, Nova Scotia, Canada

## 1944

### **+BOYD, Eric**

Royal Ulster Rifles, 2nd Btn. Corporal. 7021619. Died 10/06/1944. Aged 26. Son of David and Eva Boyd; husband of Muriel Edith Boyd, of Cregagh, Belfast. Hermanville War Cemetery, Calvados, France

### **+CLARKE, Patrick Joseph**

Royal Fusiliers (City of London Regiment), Fusilier. No 4 Commando. 6482285. Died 10/06/1944. Aged 31. Son of Daniel and Mary Clarke, Bessbrook; Husband to Irene Margaret, Bessbrook. Newry. Ranville War Cemetery, France. Bessbrook RH

### **+GRACEY, William Gracey**

Royal Ulster Rifles, 2nd Btn. Rifleman. 7012043. Died 10/06/1944. Aged 30. Son of John and Elizabeth Gracey; Husband to Winnie Gracey (nee Taylor) of Hill Street, Lurgan. Gosport (Ann's Hill) Cemetery, Hampshire.



### **+GREER, Joseph**

Royal Ulster Rifles, 2nd Btn. 1st Bn. The London Irish Rifles. Rifleman. 7011223. Died 10/06/1944 at a military hospital in Northern Ireland. Aged 33. He sustained wounds serving with Royal Ulster Rifles in Italy and returned home from the front for treatment. He enlisted in 1930 and served in Palestine, North Africa, and Italy. A brother, Albert Greer, served in the Royal Air Force and another brother Samuel Greer was also in the Army. Son of Joseph and Jane Greer, of Belfast; husband to Margaret R. Greer, of Snugville Street, Belfast. The funeral conducted by Reverend WEK Allander took place with full military honours. Belfast City Cemetery, Glenalina Extension

### **+HENRY, Andrew Alexander**

RAFVR. Flying Officer (Air Bomber). 131970. Died 10/05/1944. Aged 22. 50 Sqdn. Son of Robert James Henry and of Elizabeth Ewing Henry (nee Tennant), of Cookstown, Co. Tyrone. Forest-Our-Marque Communal Cemetery, Nord, France

### **+STOGDALE, John**

Royal Ulster Rifles. 1st Btn. Corporal. 3386927. Died 10/06/1944. Aged 22. Born in County Tyrone. Son of George and Phoebe Stogdale of Blackburn, Lancashire. Hermanville War Cemetery, Calvados, France

## **1945**

### **+REUBEN, Albert Edward**

Royal Army Ordnance Corps. Corporal. 7212199. Died 10/06/1945. Aged 46. Husband to Sarah Francis Reuben of Bangor, Co. Down. Bangor New Cemetery

## **+McCRACKEN, William Edward**

Royal Australian Artillery, 4 Anti Tank Regt. Gunner.  
VX37108. Died 10/06/1945 of an illness whilst a PoW of the  
Japanese. Aged 35. Son of Mr. and Mrs. R. McCracken, of  
Finaghy. Labuan Memorial, Malaysia

**Every day is a Remembrance Day**

***We will remember them***

**On this day**

**1915** - British/French troops conquer German colony of  
Cameroon

**1940** - German motorcycle units somewhere in France.  
These combinations played a huge roll in the rapid  
advancement across France.



Bundesarchiv, Bild 1011-054-1525-09  
Foto: Schweizer | Mai 1940

**1940** - as France collapses under the German Blitzkrieg, the Kingdom of Italy declares war on Britain and France.

**1944** - The Allies lost nearly 15,000 men on the evening of 10 June, killed, wounded, missing in action or taken prisoner.

## 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 [houston.mckelvey@btinternet.com](mailto:houston.mckelvey@btinternet.com)

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