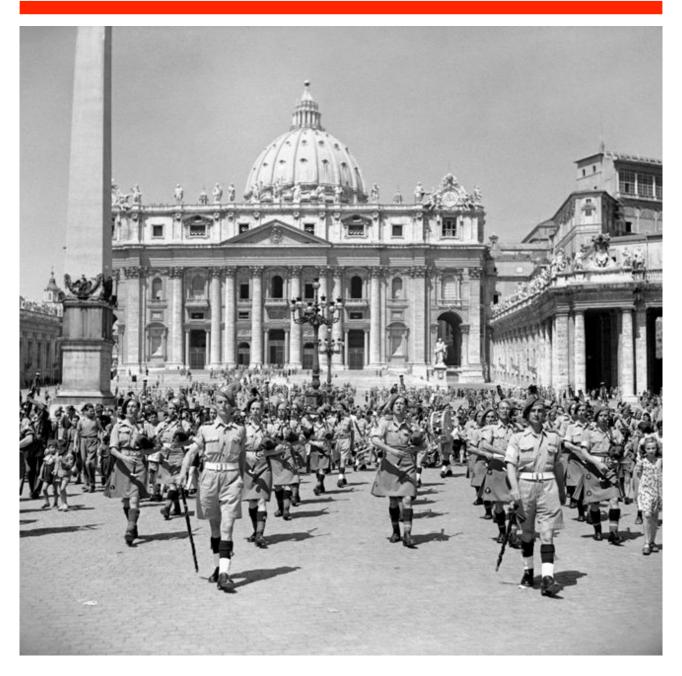


## remembrance ni



June 12, 1944 - The 38th (Irish) Division were invited to the Vatican for a meeting with Pope Pius XII.

# Orangemen visited the Pope and the Sash was played at the Vatican

Dr Kiernan, Irish Ambassador to the Holy See, and Brigade Chaplain Father Dan Kelleher arranged for Brigadier Pat Scott and 150 men from the 38th (Irish) Brigade to meet with Pope Pius on 12/06/1944.



The reception in the Vatican was attended by both Catholic and Protestant soldiers.

CQMS Edmund O'Sullivan (left centre) said "The Catholics in the detachment and many others went into Mass at the Blessed Sacrament altar. I was the master of ceremonies and there were about ten other servers. To serve Mass in St Peter's Cathedral was



beyond belief.."

Pope Pius XII said
"You belong to the nation which has ever belonged to God's church since St Patrick."

## Brigade Chaplain Rev Dan Kelleher

The Pipes and Drums played for the occasion in St Peter's Square.

Brigadier Pat Scott wrote at the time, "I had lunch with the Eire Minister to the

Vatican, Dr Kiernan and his family. They were deeply interested in the Irish Brigade and the Minister felt that in wishing us well he was representing the feelings of both his government and country"

"It is matter of great concern to all of us from who come from Ireland that when the war is over, it will only be remembered that Eire was neutral. What we hope is that all the magnificent deeds wrought by the sons of Eire in this war, against the barbarians of Germany and her Allies, may be remembered to her credit. It is sometimes overlooked that the services of every Irishman from any part of Ireland are

given of their own free will for the good of the cause, be they fighting men or those priests, who helped the English prisoners in Rome."

## An account based on contemporary sources

Seven days after the fighting at Sinogogga, the Hitler Line was broken and the Allies could march on to Rome. At one point, a soldier in the Royal Irish Fusiliers remembered approaching a junction commanded by an officer of the Irish Regiment of Canada. "Canadian Irish, this way," he barked, enjoying the global span of Irish soldiers before him. "English Irish, that way."

The Americans got to Rome first, but on June 12 the Irish Brigade accepted a special invitation to visit Pope Pius XII. Brigadier Pat Scott was an Irish Protestant but he most certainly was not going to miss such an honour for the brigade; he faced competition for the limited number of places for the papal audience.

"Many influential members of Orange Lodges were trying to get a seat in the party by virtue of their high rank or long service," observed Scott. He intended that Catholic soldiers of long service should get first choice, and those born in Ireland, but there were not enough to fill the quota of officers from each battalion so Protestants took the spare places.

"The 'heretic' element was almost entirely made up of outand-out Orangemen [i.e., Irish Protestants]. I would like to



mention a few names, both of these officers and of some men of the other ranks who afterward visited His Holiness, but it might be unkind to put their names in print and have them read out in their local Orange Hall at home."

The Irish Brigade party arrived at the Vatican at 8:45 am and was escorted by the elaborately clad Papal Guards to the audience. Pope Pius XII gave a short speech praising the Irish for spreading the faith around the world to America,

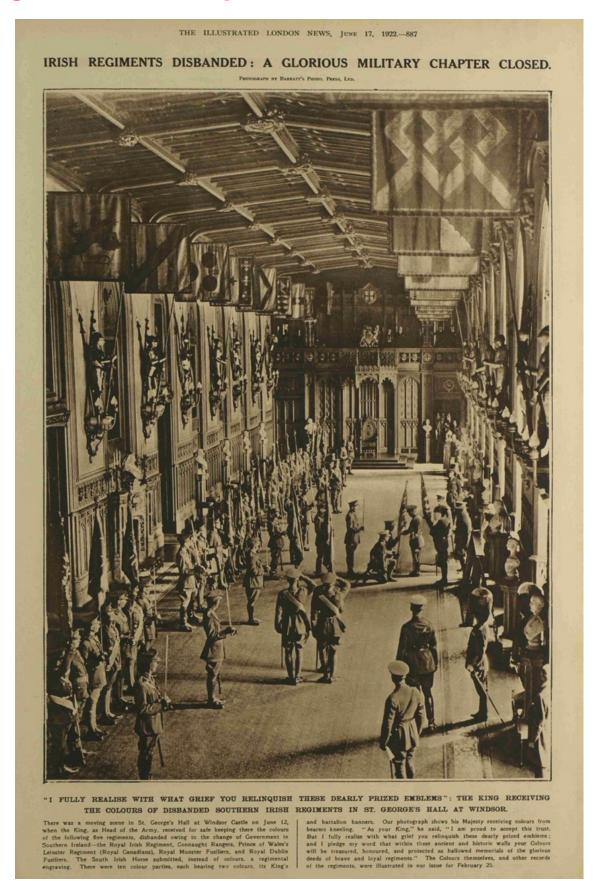


Irish **Brigade** meets **Papal Guards** Australia, South Africa, and other nations. Scott then asked the Pope if he would like to hear his pipers play.

Brigadier O'Sullivan was at the audience and noted the irony of what followed next: "The massed brigade band in their saffron kilts and caubeens with the various coloured hackles and regimental badges played 'Killaloe,' followed by 'The Sash My Father Wore.' This was probably the first and last time one of the signature tunes of the Orange Order was heard in the Vatican. His Holiness tapped his foot to the beat of the martial music and obviously enjoyed the alien sound.

The Pope then blessed the rosaries brought by the Catholic soldiers and they knelt to kiss his ring. The Orangemen remained in their seats.

# June 12, 1922 - Colours of six Irish Regiments laid up at Windsor Castle



On12/06/1922 King George V hosted a formal ceremony at Windsor Castle to mark the disbandment of six Irish regiments: the Royal Irish Regiment, Connaught Rangers, the Leinster Regiment, Royal Munster Fusiliers, Royal Dublin Fusiliers & South Irish Horse.

The British army withdrew its troops from the newlyestablished Irish Free State in 1922 and handed over the various barracks to the new national army headed by chief-of-staff Michael Collins, Michael Parsons writes in An Irishman's Diary in The Irish Times 08/04/2014

A subsequent reorganisation of the British army, ordered by defence chiefs in London, resulted in the disbandment of the six Southern Irish regiments: the Royal Irish Regiment, the Connaught Rangers, the Leinster Regiment, the Royal Munster Fusiliers, the Royal Dublin Fusilers and the South Irish Horse (a cavalry regiment).

King George V hosted a formal ceremony at Windsor Castle on Monday, June 12th, 1922 to mark the disbandment. All six regiments sent detachments to Windsor for the occasion, which prompted an outpouring of nostalgia and affection. The list of names of the soldiers who marched through the town – along the same streets through which President Higgins and Queen Elizabeth will travel by carriage this morning (08/04/2014) – reads like a roll-call of Ireland: Bergin, Boyd, Burke-Gaffney, Carroll-Leahy, Cullen, Doyle, Dunne, Foley, Kehoe, Malone, Monaghan, O'Brien, Prendergast, Wallace. As they assembled in the castle quadrangle, the band played *Auld Lang Syne*.

The king, wearing the service uniform of a field-marshall, and Queen Mary, dressed in white, entered St George's Hall in the castle at 11.30. Among the guests were the Duke of Connaught, the Earl of Athlone; and Princess Alice, Countess of Athlone. The regimental flags were presented to the king by officers on bended knee.

As reported in the *Times*, George V's emotional speech to his Irish soldiers ended with this promise: "I fully realise with what grief you relinquish these dearly-prized emblems; and I pledge my word that within these ancient and historic walls your colours will be treasured, honoured, and protected as hallowed memorials of the glorious deeds of brave and loyal regiments."

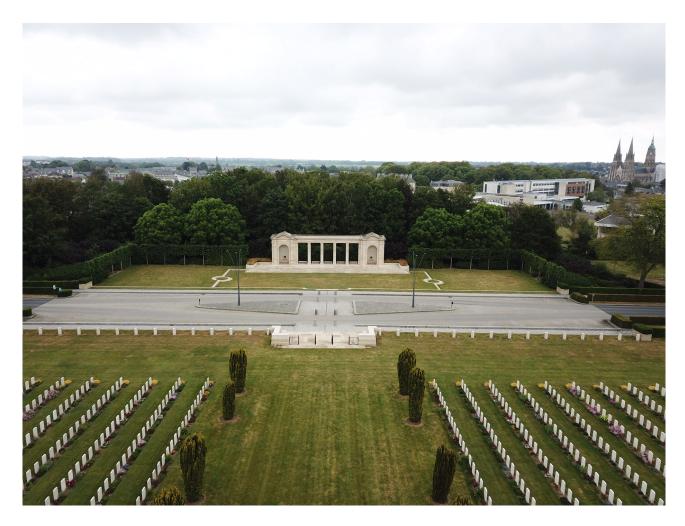
The king was true to his word and the colours have been kept safely in Windsor Castle ever since.

The British army still has two Irish regiments: a newly constituted Royal Irish Regiment – formed in 1992 by amalgamating various units – which is headquartered in Northern Ireland and whose colonel-in-chief is the Duke of York; and the Irish Guards, founded in 1900, headquartered in England and known affectionately as "the Micks", whose colonel-in-chief is listed as "HM The Queen" and whose honorary colonels include the Duke of Cambridge (Prince William), who wore the uniform on his wedding day.

Both regiments have an Irish wolfhound as mascot: the Royal Irish Regiment's current incumbent is Brian Boru IX who wears, on parade, a green coat trimmed with silver lace and a Tara brooch; the Irish Guards' dog is called Domhnall, whose parade uniform is a splendid scarlet tunic, and who had shamrock pinned to his collar this St Patrick's Day by

none other than the Duchess of Cambridge (formerly Kate Middleton).

Far from leading a typical dog's life, Domhnall has the life of Riley: he is entitled to the services of the Royal Army Veterinary Corps as well as quartering and food at public expense.



The CWGC Bayeux Memorial stands opposite the cemetery and bears the names of more than 1,800 men of the Commonwealth land forces who died in the early stages of the campaign and have no known grave. The road in front of the memorial was built by Royal Engineers as one of the first ever ring-roads, to allow reinforcements following up to avoid the narrow streets of Bayeaux. A memorial in itself.



Family
discovered RNR
officer from
Whitehead
illegally kept his
D Day orders for
Operation
Neptune

After a house fire, his family discovered Lieutenant Alexander North Hardy (Left) had retained his copy of the orders for D Day

Lieutenant Alexander Hardy was in HMS Valena, a minesweeper, used to sweep French beaches on 05/06/1944 in heavy weather prior to D Day.

In 2013 it was reported in the Daily Telegraph that his family had found an inch-thick document – which should have been destroyed at the end of the Normandy invasion – gives a detailed account of the navy's role in the landings.

The orders were issued to Royal Navy officers who were involved in Operation Neptune – the code-name for the initial phase of the D-Day mission.

Hardy, who died in 1978 at the age of 70, held on to them after the war and they ended up in a chest of old family documents in the loft of one of his daughter's home.

They were only discovered after the property caught fire and the box was recovered and its contents checked for damage. The family then agreed to release some pages of the documents, to mark the 69th anniversary of D-Day.

His son-in-law, said: "The front page says it should be 'destroyed by fire on completion of the operation'. But it seems my father in law didn't have a fire available at the time."

As well as charts of the routes across the channel that the Allied fleet was to take, it contains around 50 photographs, presumably taken from a submarine lying off the coast, of the enemy shoreline onto which the invasion force was to land.

The images were not to be used as navigational aides, but to help sailors to identify different areas of the beaches.

The document also instructed ships as to what their particular role was to be. For minesweepers like HMS Valena, they were to clear designated areas of any mines, and then act in a "communication" role.

The book also contains details of what the fleet should do, if German patrol boats, submarines or heavy battleships were to arrive on the scene and disrupt the landings – and also



#### HMS Valena - Anti-submarine Yacht - FY.028

Launched by Fleming & Ferguson Paisley, Yard No 373, on 5/3/1908 as the steel Schooner Rigged Steam Yacht, Dolaura, for James Dunsmuir, London & Victoria BC. September 1939 requisitioned by the Admiralty for use as an anti-submarine yacht. She was attached to the 89th Anti-Submarine Group based at Portland January 1941 84th Anti-submarine Group at Campbeltown January 1942 84th Anti-submarine Group at Ardrossan 1945 returned to owners.

what to do in the event of the invasion failing and the Allied forces needing to withdraw.

"They were basically, to go back the way they came," Hardy's son-in-law said.

"There is also lots of technical stuff in there, instructions about call signs and how to verify and authenticate things.

"But there are also some beautifully drawn charts and, amid all the military detail, what I think is a magnificently concise description of what D-Day was all about: 'The object of Operation Neptune is to carry out a joint Anglo-American operation from the United Kingdom to secure a lodgement on the Continent from which further offensive operations can be developed'."

Hardy was the father of Ann Willis, a SAFFA activist in NI. She said that, as a child, she had played with the documents, not knowing what they were.

Hardy, from Whitehead, had worked for a shipping company in Birmingham before the war.

Earlier in the conflict, he had served on escort duty during the Battle of the Atlantic. 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.

The ship itself was a converted private yacht, rather than a purpose-built warship and had on board, among other luxuries, a four poster bed and a Royal Doulton bath.

## **Roll of Honour - June 12**

Representing their comrades who died on this day

1915

## +DOAK, John

Black Watch (Royal Highlanders), 1st Btn. Private. S/5954. Died 12/06/1915. Aged 32. 1st Battalion Black Watch were based at Aldershot with the 1st (Guards) Brigade, 1st Division, when the Great War broke out in August 1914. They proceeded to France almost immediately, landing at Le Havre on August 14, and being amongst the first troops of the British Expeditionary Force. In May 1915, the month before the death of Private Doak, they were in action at the Battle of Aubers Ridge. Four Black Watch battalions were involved at Aubers Ridge. Though the battle was a defeat, the mauled 1st Battalion would leave the battlefield with witnesses praising its courage and fighting spirit. He was born at Galliagh, County Londonderry, enlisted at Clydebank, Dumbartonshire, Scotland. He was the youngest son of John and Jane – who possibly died on February 3, 1922 – and brother of Margaret Doak, Bogslea, Shantallow, Londonderry. His remains are interred in Chocques Military Cemetery, Pas de Calais, France, and his name is commemorated on the Diamond War Memorial.

#### 1916

#### +BIGGAR, Peter

Royal Scots. 13th Btn. Private. 22853. Died 12/06/1916. Age 19. Son of Patrick and Elizabeth Biggar. He was born in Addiewell, Midlothian, Scotland about 1897. Peter was living in Edinburgh when he enlisted in with the Royal Scots in Leith. Newspapers reported that he died as a result of an accident. Newspaper reports confirm he had lived in Stewartstown, although he is not listed on Stewartstown War Memorial. The CWGC record Private Peter Biggar as

the son of Patrick and Elizabeth Biggar of Stewartstown, County Tyrone. Vermelles British Cemetery, France

#### 1940

### +McCALLA, William Trevor

RNVR. Lieutenant. Died 12/06/1940. Age 35. HM Trawler Sisapon. Completed on 27/12/1928. Taken over by the Admiralty in September 1939. Displacement: 326 tons. HMT Sisapon (Skr. Frederick Alfred Henson, RNR) was mined and sunk off Harwich on 12/061940. WT McCalla was a frequent Competitor in Ulster T.T. Races. "E" Class Lap Record, 1935. Winner of Co. Down Trophy Race, 1934. Director, W. McCalla and Co., Belfast, and Proprietor, Ulster Steam Tender Co. Member, Belfast Local Marine Board. B 16/11/1904. Husband to Pamela McCalla (nee Cooper), Amesbury, Wiltshire. Son of William and Mabel Mary McCalla, Greenoge, Strandtown, Belfast. Campbell College 1326. Buried Shotley (St Mary's) Graveyard. RNIYC WM

## +WHITLEY, Cecil John

RN. Able Seaman. D/JX 158636. Died 12/06/1940. Age 18. HMS Calypso. In early 1940, Calypso was sent to Alexandria in the eastern Mediterranean. Calypso was the first Royal Naval vessel to be sunk by the Regia Marina in the Second World War. Two days after Italy declared war on Great Britain, Calypso was on an anti-shipping patrol against Italian ships travelling to Libya when she was struck by one torpedo from an Italian submarine about 50 miles south of Cape Lithion in Crete in the Eastern Mediterranean. The sinking occurred at 00:59 on 12/06/1940. Educated at Belfast Mercantile College. His father was a lieutenant in

RUR who was badly gassed in WW1. His brother Thomas Lloyd Whitley was also serving in RN. Son of George Sephton Whitley and Ellie S. Whitley, Cavehill Rd, Belfast. (Belfast Weekly Telegraph 29/06/1940). Plymouth Naval Memorial, Panel 38

#### 1941

## **+HANNAY**, Herbert

RAFVR. Flight Sergeant. 754380. MiD. Died 12/06/1941. Aged 21. 51 Sqdn. Herbert Hannay was born in Bangor around 1920. He attended Bangor Grammar School as a scholarship student and his headmaster, Maurice Wilkins said of him, "Bertie Hannay was... a boy of genial and attractive character, who took part with zest in every school activity and was universally beloved. I seem to remember his mother's interest and enthusiasm in all that concerned the school — a parent upon whose support we could count." Son of William Herbert and Rosa Hannay, Bangor; Husband to Ena Hannay. Eindhoven (Woensel) General Cemetery, Netherlands. Family memorial in Bangor Cemetery

## +NEILL, William

RAF. Leading Aircraftman. 639833. Died 12/06/1941. Aged 22. Son of James and Mary Neill, Coleraine. Coleraine Cemetery

### 1942

#### +GILMORE John

RN. Able Seaman. C/SSX 18758. Died 12/06/1942. Age 29. HMS Grove. Eight years service. HMS Grove had taken part in the sinking of U-587 on 27/03/1942, laying depth charges along with HMS Aldenham, HMS Volunteer, and HMS Leamington. HMS Grove was a relatively new ship, built by English shipyard Swan, Hunter & Wigham Richardson Ltd. in 1942. In June 1942, it left Alexandria, Egypt bound for Malta in Convoy MW-11, part of Operation Vigourous. The ship sank after an attack from U-77 captained by Heinrich Schonder off the coast El Salloum on the Egypt/Libya border. Under the captaincy of Commander JW Rylands, Grove took two direct torpedo strikes at 0537hrs. One hundred and ten men died on board leaving sixty survivors.

"Mr. and Mrs. Terence Gilmore, Maymore, Toye, Killyleagh, have been officially notified that their eldest son, A.B. John Gilmore has been killed by enemy action. He had eight years' service with the Royal Navy, and was home last Christmas. He was torpedoed on two occasions and was in the Dunkirk episode. His younger brother, Edward, is at present in the Navy." Son of Mr. and Mrs. Terence Gilmore. (Belfast Weekly Telegraph 26//06/1942). Chatham Naval Memorial, Panel 54 Killyleagh WM

### 1943

## **+LEITH-ROSS**, Thomas Leith-Ross

RAF. Sergeant Died 12/06/1943. 408 Squadron. He was Flight-Engineer aboard Halifax JB790 with the Code EQ-V when it took off from R.A.F. Leeming at 23.39 on 12/06/1943.

The mission was raid on Bochum however the aircraft was attacked at 01.22 by Hptm. Egmont Prinz Zur Lippe Weissenfeld who was serving with 111 / NJG 1 Night Fighter Squadron. The attack took place at 15,000 feet above Sellen near the City of Burgsteinfurt which is Northwest of Munster.

Of the crew of seven men aboard the Halifax only Sergeant Leith-Ross and Canadian Francis Milburn were killed with the five others becoming Prisoners-of-War.

The two Crew members are buried side by side. Thomas was the son of James Alexander Ross and Margaret Ross from Carclinty, County Antrim. Reichswald Forest War Cemetery, Germany.

### +MONTGOMERY, David

RAFVR. Sergeant (Air Gunner). 1119211, Died 12/06/1943. 78th Squadron. Next of kin: Mr. Joseph Montgomery, Patrick Place, Ballymena. Eindhoven (Woensel) General Cemetery, Holland. West Presbyterian Church, Ballymena RH

### +McNEILL, Leonard

RNVR. Flight Lieutenant.124174. Died 12/06/1944. Aged 23. 174 Sqdn. Son of John Albert and Annie McNeill, of Belfast. Runnymede Memorial, Panel 203

## +McVITTY, George

RAFVR. Pilot Officer (Air Bomber).131165. Died 12/06/1943. Aged 22. 100 Sqdn. Son of Aaron and Margaret

McVitty, of Coleraine. Bergen-op-Zoom War Cemetery, Noord-Brabant, Netherlands

### +SHAW, Alexander

RAFVR. Sergeant (Wireless Op./Air Gunner).1127874. Died 12/06/1943. Aged 23. 78 Sqdn. Son of John and Sarah Shaw, of Crossgar. Eindhoven (Woensel) General Cemetery, Noord-Brabant, Netherlands

### +WERTS, George Leslie

RNVR. Lieutenant (A). Died 12/06/1943. Aged 37. At the time of his death, he served at HMS Daedalus, a shore base for the Royal Navy's Fleet Air Arm in Hampshire. He was the Pilot of Queen's University Air Squadron De Havilland Tiger Moth X5045. The plane took off from Sydenham Airfield, Belfast before stalling and coming down around 1545hrs on 12/06/1943 on the Stormont Estate, Belfast.In the GRO War Death Naval Officers Indices Lieutenant (A) George Leslie Werts is recorded as serving with HMS *Caroline* whilst in the CWGC Debt of Honour he is recorded as serving with HMS Daedalus. From 1939 HMS Daedalus (previously RNAS Lee-on-Solent) was under the control of the Fleet Air Arm; Fleet Air Arm personnel based at RAF Sydenham, Belfast came under HMS Caroline. Flying Officer (Pilot) Douglas Williams J/15206 from Hamilton, Ontario, Canada also died as a result of the crash. He was serving with 410 Squadron Royal Canadian Air Force. He was on attachment to RAF Belfast (Sydenham) from 1480 Flight based at Newtownards. He was 22 years old and the Son of Henry Ernest and Christina Campbell Williams, of Hamilton, Ontario, Canada. George was the Son of Charles Jerome Werts and Gertrude Sarah Werts of Ipswich, Suffolk, and husband of Winifred Edith Werts (née Miles) of Ealing,

Middlesex. Both rest at Glenalina Extension, Belfast City Cemetery.

#### +WILSON, Andrew James Normandale

RAFVR. Sergeant (Pilot). 1501266. Died 12/06/1943. Aged 22. 76 Sqdn. On 12/06/1943 at 0140hrs, a Halifax V of the 76 Squadron, Bomber Command, was shot down about four kilometres south of Bladel, a small town in southern Holland, only three kilometres from the Belgian border. The pilot was Sergeant Andrew James Normandale Wilson who, with five other crew members, was killed. There was one survivor, the navigator, Sergeant Y E S Lobban. Son of Harry Pringle Wilson and Ruby Wilson, of Donaghmore, Co. Tyrone. Eindhoven (Woensel) General Cemetery, Noord-Brabant, Netherlands. Dungannon WM

## +WILSON, John Lindsay

RAFVR. Flight Sergeant. 1128900. Died 12/06/1943. Aged 24. 7 Sqdn. Son of Joseph Turner Wilson and Agnes Edith Wilson, of Belfast. Runnymede Memorial, Surrey, Panel 140. Belmont Presbyterian Church, Belfast, RH

#### 1944

## +McBURNEY, William Ashwood

Royal Ulster Rifles, 1st Btn.Rifleman. 7046106. Died 12/06/1944 in the area of Le Mesnil. Aged 23. Son of Joseph and Annie McBurney, Banbridge. Ranville War Cemetery, Calvados, France

## +McSORLEY, John Francis

A.A.C.The Parachute Regiment, 9th Btn. Private. 1595047. Died 12/06/1944. Aged 27. Son of Patrick and Mary McSorley, of Gortin, Co. Tyrone. Ranville War Cemetery, Calvados, France

#### **VETERANS**

## **BEGGS, Sam**

WW2 Royal Marine from Bangor.

Sam Beggs had joined the Royal Marines when he was 20 years old. Prior to this he had attempted to enlist in the Army, Royal Navy and Royal Air Force however the fact that he was underage was discovered at each attempt! After being accepted by the Royal Marines he trained for 10 months at Stonehouse Barracks, Plymouth.

He joined HMS Orion in 1942. Orion is known for having arrived off the Normandy coast at 05:00 on 6th June 1944. The ship fired the opening salvo of the attack and by 14:00 a total of 1200 shells had been used so she returned to Potsmouth for more ammunition!

During his service on HMS Orion the ship escorted Convoys along the North African coast however after receiving treatment for dysentery in Alexandria he joined H.M.S. Argonaut which was going to Japan via Australia. The Japanese surrendered prior to his arrival.

Sam saw action in North Africa, Burma, Italy, France, Germany, Malta and Japan.

After the war he needed surgery for leg wounds he had received before being discharged in 1946. He was a Carpenter for a few years before emigrating to Australia in 1948 and received the Legion of Honour in France on the 72nd Anniversary of D-Day in 2016 before passing away on 12th June 2019 at the age of 95. (Information from County Down Spectator)

## **SLEITH, Thomas**

Veteran born on 12/06/1916, son of James and Sarah (nee Wilson) Sleith. The family lived in Devonshire Street off Cullingtree Road, Belfast and Tommy enlisted on 20/09/1939.

As Army number T/106521, Tommy served as a Motorcycle Dispatch Rider with the Royal Army Service Corps. He was taken Prisoner of War in Belgium but escaped and made his way to Dunkirk from where he was evacuated on the third day.

Tommy subsequently joined the Commandos and served in 3 Troop, Number 9 Commando. He was in action in Narvik, Norway, St. Nazaire, Crete, North Africa, Sicily, Anzio, Monte Casino and on through Italy as far north as Florence as well as Greece and Yugoslavia.

Tommy was demobbed in June 1945. He died in 2000

## **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 <a href="mailto:houston.mckelvey@btinternet.com">houston.mckelvey@btinternet.com</a>

**Contact -** Simply input Remembrance ni in the title bar and give your first and second names with e-mail address in body of text. There is also a contact facility on the web site. See Menu at <a href="https://remembranceni.org/">https://remembranceni.org/</a>