



remembrance ni



## **RUR Rifleman survived the beaches, Cambes Wood and the liberation of Copenhagen**

**Rifleman Stanley Burrows served in 2nd Battalion Royal Ulster Rifles during World War Two.**

Born in Belfast, Co. Antrim, he attended Harding Memorial Primary School before taking on work in the shipyards.



**On the 60th anniversary of D-Day, veterans Stanley Burrows and Richard Keegan on Sword Beach where they landed with the Second Battalion of the Royal Ulster Rifles**

His father and uncles had served with distinction in the British Army and so, aged 18 years old in 1940, Stanley Burrows wanted to enlist.

He worked full-time in the shipyards and his father convinced bosses there to refuse Stanley permission to leave. Men working in the shipyard were important to the war effort as Harland and Wolff built many vessels for the Royal Navy.

Determined to enlist, Burrows got himself sacked from Harland and Wolff and joined 70th Battalion Royal Ulster Rifles. Intensive training began immediately. By 1941, when Stanley Burrows went to England with the Rifles, he had experienced the horrors of war.

The Luftwaffe bombed Belfast in what became known as the **Belfast Blitz**. As a young soldier with 70th Battalion, Burrows directed people to safety in Belfast's Corporation



## **The cornfield the men from 2RUR had to cross to reach Cambes Wood**

Street. Later, he would find himself digging bodies from the rubble.

Soon after moving to England, 70th Battalion disbanded. Burrows applied for the Commandos but his request came too late. He instead joined the gliders of 6th Airborne Division. To gain Para wings, a soldier had to make eight flights. Stanley Burrows would not get that far.

A second medical examination revealed that Burrows had had a perforated eardrum, which he had concealed. After six weeks with the paratroopers, his trick of drying out his seeping ear with peroxide had come undone. Many years later, after the death of his mother, Stanley learned she had tipped the authorities off.

From 6th Airborne, Stanley moved to 2nd Battalion Royal Ulster Rifles . Training began immediately. While some believed they were bound for Sicily, a move to Droxford, Hampshire saw them prepare for Normandy.

On **D-Day**, Burrows was part of 9th Platoon, 'A' Company, 2nd Battalion Royal Ulster Rifles . Bound for Sword Beach on a landing craft, Burrows was one of many soldiers who wrote one last letter home. Aged 22 years old, he addressed his to his mother in Belfast. The sea and sky were almost black with ships and planes. A shell struck Stanley's landing craft but failed to explode. From this ship, Company Sergeant Major Walsh of 'A' Company and Rifleman Michael "Sticky" Ryan MM of 'B' Company formed a lifeline. This rope allowed men to pull themselves ashore.

Carrying 56 lbs of equipment, "Bettsy" his Bren gun, and a fold-up bicycle, Burrows knew he would not make it to the beach. He threw the bicycle overboard and his D-Day began as shells and mortars fell around him. All Burrows company made it ashore to the assembly point at Lion-sur-Mer deflecting sniper attacks all the way.

On 7th June 1944, 'A' Company followed the lead of 'D' Company on a failed attack on the well-defended Cambes Wood. They would end the day retreating to Le Mesnil having avoided mortar fire, snipers, and four Luftwaffe planes.

On 9th June 1944, Stanley Burrows' company again attacked Cambes Wood. Nine men from his platoon made it through the 10-foot wall into the woods. They fought through to a farmhouse taken by Lieutenant Corporal White. He





**Stanley with all the medals  
gained by his family from  
military service**

requested a volunteer to return to Captain Montgomery to inform of their whereabouts. Burrows volunteered without hesitation. He returned through the woods, shouting for his own company to not shoot him and relayed the message before rejoining his platoon. For the next while, 'A' Company would make Cambes Wood their home.

On 19th June 1944, Stanley Burrows became an unlikely casualty at **Cambes Wood**. The Belfast man saw a chicken wandering through no-man's land, sprang into action and within minutes the bird was in a soup. As Burrows cooked up the chicken broth in a biscuit tin, a shell landed nearby and boiling water covered him.

As he dived for cover, Burrows' fellow soldiers realised he had caught fire and extinguished his burning clothes. He sought no treatment from medics and his body went into shock. His skin blistered and he learned he would have to return to England for treatment.

On the return to the United Kingdom, Stanley's medical plane came under attack from the Royal Navy. Once again, he escaped unscathed. He would rejoin the Rifles that summer but after another injury on 9th August 1944, his service ended.

It was at Cambes Wood on 23rd June 1944, Stanley Burrows lost his best friend Hugh Crangles. A German sniper shot the 22-year old through the neck. The two men from Belfast, along with Robert Beck, made up the tight unit of Burrows, Beck, and Crangles – "The BBC".

Stanley would return many times to Normandy to pay tribute to Crangles and the other men of 2nd Battalion.

Burrows went on to serve with other units throughout the war including the 1st Paratroopers who liberated **Copenhagen**. He demobbed after World War Two in 1946.

Stanley Burrows observed the 60th anniversary of D-Day in Normandy with a group from **Lisburn Royal British Legion**. They spent five days there visiting the beaches, cemeteries, and memorials. Burrows carried a blackthorn walking stick and wore his green beret bearing the cap badge of the Royal Ulster Rifles. Next to him walked Richard Keegan who served in 'D' Company of the same battalion in 1944.

**Rifleman Stanley Burrows MBE died on 2nd October 2004 after a short illness.**

# On this Day – June 13

## **1916**

The Canadians retake positions lost at Ypres on the 2nd June.

## **1917**

German day time plane raid on London. A reported 162 killed and 432 injured. The worst air attack on British soil of the entire war.

## **1940**

Germans troops advance on both sides of Paris. General Weygand declares the French capital an open city.

Armed merchant-cruiser Scotstown is torpedoed by U-25 off Ireland, 6 crew lost. The first US arms ship, 'Eastern Prince', sets sail for Britain.

Italian bombers attack the French naval base at Toulon. The British submarine Odin is sunk by the Italian destroyer Strale in Gulf of Taranto. The German raider Orion lays mines off Auckland, New Zealand.

## **1941**

The Luftwaffe carries out a raid on the British naval base at Chatham, but with little success.

Twenty Nine people are killed, when German dive-bombers sink the Great Western Railway Steamer St. Patrick.

Russian news agency Tass, denies German threat on its borders and calls rumors "absurd and obviously sheer hostile propaganda." The Russians begin to arrest those in the Baltic States who might support a German occupation. In all, about 50,000 are rounded up, with the majority never to be seen alive again.

Russo-Japanese trade agreement announced in Tokyo.

## 1942

A train containing 746 Jews departed Platform 17 at Berlin's Grunewald Railway Station for an unknown destination. More than 48,000 Jews made this same journey during WW2 - today the platform is preserved as a memorial

President Roosevelt authorizes the creation of the U.S. Office on War Information (OWI). The first director is Elmer Holmes Davis, a CBS commentator and novelist.

German tanks and anti-tank batteries destroy 138 British tanks in and around the Knightsbridge pocket. This left the Eighth Army with only 75 armoured vehicles operational and threatened the main British supply route along the Trigh Capuzzo, which in turn threatened the 1st South African and British 50th Division which were still defending the northern part of the Gazala line. Lieutenant General Ritchie, without informing General Auchinleck, who wanted to hold west of Tobruk, ordered these two divisions to pull back towards Tobruk.





Shortly after midnight on the morning of June 13, four men landed on a beach near Amagansett, Long Island, New York, from a German submarine, clad in German uniforms and bringing ashore enough explosives, primers, and incendiaries to support an expected two-year career in the sabotage of American defense-related production. On June 17, a similar group landed on Ponte Vedra Beach, near Jacksonville, Florida, equipped for a similar career in industrial disruption. However, all are captured within days and six are executed after a trial.

## 1943

Night fighter ace Wing Commander John Cunningham, brings down his 16th victim over southern England.

## 1944

**Photo above** - German Tiger tank commander Michael Wittmann of 12th SS Panzer Division stops the entire British

7th Armoured Division advance to Caen, "single-handedly", at Villers-Bocage. Wittmann destroyed in less than fifteen minutes 13 tanks, 2 anti-tank guns and 14 transport vehicles.

## 1945

U.S. and Australian troops enter Brunei, in Borneo.

The first V1 flying bomb is launched against Britain during Operation 'Rumpelkammer' and hits Swanscombe in Kent at 0418, causing shock and near panic among the civilian population.

# Roll of Honour – June 13

*Representing their comrades who died on this day*

## 1915

### **+BARBER, John James**

Lancashire Fusiliers. 1st/7th Btn. Private. 2357. Died 13/06/1915. Age 32. Enlisted in Salford. Husband to Rose Ann Barber, of Tyance, Portglenone. Helles Memorial, Turkey (including Gallipoli)

### **+CULLY, George**

Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers. 1st Btn. Private. 9419. Died 13/06/1915. Age 29. Son of Sarah Cully of Belfast. Twelve Tree Copse Cemetery, Turkey (including Gallipoli)

**+FAIRBAIRN, William Andrew**

8th (King's Royal Irish) Hussars, B Sqdn. Lance Corporal. H/ 6139. Died 13/06/1915. Aged 28. A butter and egg merchant. Son of Thomas and Margaret Fairbairn, of McKee's Terrace, Dungannon. Perth Cemetery (China Wall), West-Vlaanderen, Belgium, Dungannon WM, St Ann's C of I Dungannon WM

**1916**

**+OLIVER, Ernest**

Canadian Infantry, 16th Btn. Corporal. 472017. Died 13/06/1916 at Tyillebeke, Near Ypres. Aged 26. Son of Samuel and Elizabeth Oliver, of The Bungalow, Coalisland. Both his parents worked in the local National School. Ernest Oliver emigrated to Canada. He worked as a clerk. Ernest Oliver enlisted in Saskatoon, Canada on 12/07/1915. Ypres (Menin Gate) Memorial, West-Vlaanderen, Belgium

**+PARK, Jacob**

Seaforth Highlanders, 5th Btn. Private. 4595. Died 13/06/1916. Age 22. Son of Mr. and Mrs. T. Park, of "Dochrie", Belmont Church Rd., Belfast. St Pol Communal Cemetery Extension, France

**+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**



## **+MARTIN, Ida**

Voluntary Aid Detachment. Nurse. Died 13/06/1917 of typhoid. whilst serving as a VAD with the UVF Hospital, 38 Belmont Road, Belfast. Belfast City Cemetery

**1918**

## **+ROGERS, John**

Gordon Highlanders. Lieutenant (and Quartermaster). DCM. Died 13/06/1918. Aged 41. John Rogers joined the army in 1894. Lieutenant (and Quartermaster) John Rogers received the Distinguished Conduct Medal (D.C.M.). Lieutenant Rogers was assaulted in Callander, north of Glasgow, in June 1918. He died at the 1st Scottish General Hospital, Aberdeen on the 13/06/1918 of 'cut throat haemorrhage shock'. Son of Francis and Mary Rogers, of Cookstown; husband to Mary J. Rogers, of 685, Garscube

Rd., Glasgow. Glasgow (St Kentigern's) Roman Catholic Cemetery, Glasgow

**1919**

**+HOBSON, W**

King's Royal Rifle Corps. Rifleman. 58599. Died 13/06/1919. Aged 34. Son of Benjamin and Eliza Hobson. Born at Stewartstown. Donaghendry Church of Ireland Churchyard, Stewartstown

**1940**

**+CRAWFORD, Wallace**

RN. FAA. Petty Officer. Wireless operator. FX/76537. Died 13/06/1940. Age 26. HMS Ark Royal, 800 Sqdn. FAA Joined RN when he was 16 and transferred to FAA. Son of William J. and Elizabeth Crawford, Glenwood St., Belfast. She was notified he was missing. (Belfast Weekly Telegraph 29/06/1940). One of two crew in Ark Royal whose remains are interred at Staadsbygd Churchyard, Norway.

**+HEGAN, William James,**

1st Btn. Royal Ulster Rifles. Rifleman, No. 7046474. Died 13/06/1940 the first day of Operation Epsom. Age 20. He landed on LZ N at Ranville on 6 June. The son of William and Jane Hegan of Tormore, Newry. His brother and three sisters also served and survived the war. Ranville Cemetery. Memorial to him in Downshire Road Presbyterian Church, Newry.

**1941**



**+McFARLAND, Donald Keith**

RAFVR. Sergeant (Pilot). 748349. Died 13/06/1941. Aged 26. 77 Sqdn. Son of the Revd. W. J. McFarland, and of Sara McFarland, of Wormit, Fife. Bergen-op-Zoom War Cemetery, Noord - Brabant, Netherlands. 502 (Ulster) Squadron WM, St Anne's Cathedral, Belfast

**1942**

**+ORR, David**

RN. AB. D/SSX 26643. Died 13/06/1942. Age 22. HMS Farouk. Four years service. Son of Mr and Mrs J Orr, Central St., Bangor. (Belfast Weekly Telegraph 10/07/1942). Plymouth Naval Memorial, Panel 65

**+RICE, MARGARET MARY**

WAAF. Corporal. 421779. Died 13/06/1942. Aged 24. Daughter of Leonard William and Margaret Liell; wife to Patrick Leslie Rice, of Enniskillen. Newcastle-upon-Tyne (West Road) Crematorium, Northumberland

**1943**

**+LEITH-ROSS, Thomas**

RAFVR. Sergeant (Flight Engineer) Died 12/06/1943. 408 (Royal Canadian Air Force) 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 a 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, Craigs, County Antrim. Reichswald Forest War Cemetery, Germany.

### **+McCLEARY, Albert**

Royal Artillery, 148th (Bedfordshire Yeomanry) Field Regiment. Gunner. 996224. Died 13/06/1943. Aged 30. 148th Field regiment saw action in France with the British Expeditionary Force in 1940. At the outbreak of war, the regiment was assigned to 18th (East Anglian Infantry). They transferred to Singapore shortly before the Fall of Singapore in February 1942. The regiment could use the 'Bedfordshire Yeomanry' designation from 17/02/1942. 15/02/1942 saw their capture in Asia. Captured British troops in the Battle of Singapore totalled around 85,000. Albert McCleary was one of thousands of men forced to work on the Burma Railway. He died in the Tonchan Prisoner of War Camp, Thailand. Born on 17/03/1913, he was the son of Andrew McCleary and Margaret McCleary (née Welch) of Hunter Street, Belfast; husband to Mary Agnes McCleary of Belfast. Kanchanaburi War Cemetery, Thailand.

## **+STERRITT, George**

Pioneer Corps. Lance Corporal. 13009152. Died 13/06/1943. Aged 50. Son of James and Catherine Sterritt; husband to Annie Sterritt, of Cookstown. Berlin 1939 - 45 War Cemetery, Berlin, Germany

## **+STIRRUP, George**

George Stirrup was the son of James and Catherine Stirrup. George Stirrup was born on 21/11/1892 in Enniskillen. He was one of at least eight children. George Stirrup enlisted with the Royal Dublin Fusiliers on 22/02/1909. He left the army in 1920, after seeing service throughout WWI. George and Annie Stirrup were married. He re-enlisted in 1940. In May 1940, during the withdrawal to Dunkirk, George was captured and became a POW. Lance Corporal George Stirrup died as a prisoner of war on 13th June 1943. Cookstown WM. War Cemetery, Berlin, Germany

## **1944**

## **+CHAMBERS, Thomas**

Royal Ulster Rifles, 1st Btn. 20 Platoon. D Coy. Lance Corporal. 7013649. Died while leading the 5th Camerons to the forming-up point prior to the attack on Ste Honorine on 13/06/1944 at Longueval. Aged 25, he had seven year's service. He was the third son of Mr Thomas Chambers and the late Mrs Chambers of Tullymore, Broughshane. His wife Sylvia and baby son resided in Swansea, Wales. Ranville War Cemetery, Calvados, France

### **+HEGAN, William James**

Royal Ulster Rifles, 1st (Airborne) Btn. Rifleman. 7046474. Died 13/06/1944. Age 20. he landed on LZ N at Ranville on 6 June. His brother and three sisters also served and survived the War. Son of William and Jane Hegan, of Tormore, Newry. Ranville War Cemetery, Calvados, France. Memorial to him in Downshire Road Presbyterian Church Newry.

### **+McCARTHY, Terence**

Royal Ulster Rifles, 1st Btn. Corporal. 7013745. Died 13/06/1944. Aged 29. He had transferred to the Battalion in May 1943. Served in 19 Platoon of D Company. The son of Terence and Selena McCarthy of Etna Drive, Belfast. His father had served in WW1. Ranville War Cemetery, Calvados, France

### **+McCLELLAND, Thomas William**

Royal Armoured Corps. 4th County of London Yeomanry (Sharpshooters). Trooper. 7902274. Died 13/06/1944. Age 26. He was a gunner and served in North Africa and Italy before taking part in the D Day landings. He died when German tank ace Michael Whittman observed a weak spot in the 7<sup>th</sup> Armoured Division's defences. He attacked and destroyed a number of tanks and armoured vehicles. Son of Richard McClelland, and of Sarah McClelland, of Ann St., Milford, Co. Armagh. Hottot-Les-Bagues War Cemetery, France

### **+McCOO, John**

Royal Ulster Rifles, 1st Btn. 19 Platoon of D Company. Rifleman. 6985059. Died 13/06/1944 while on a patrol

sweeping the woods to the rear of Battalion HQ. Aged 21. From Richhill, County Armagh, his three brothers also served, Samuel with the RUR, Cecil in the RAF and William in the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers. Ranville War Cemetery, Calvados, France

**+McCULLAGH, Frank**

Seaforth Highlanders, 2nd Btn. Private. 2821518. Died 13/06/1944. Aged 25. Son of Francis and Sarah McCullagh, of Newtownstewart, Co. Tyrone. Ranville War Cemetery, Calvados, France

**+WATSON, John**

Royal Ulster Rifles, 2nd Btn. Rifleman. 14217516. Died Between 13/06/1944 and 14/06/1944. Aged 22. Son of Richard and Elizabeth Watson, of Dunmurry. Bayeux Memorial, Calvados, France

**VETERAN**

**DOLLING, Hazel Marion Radclyffe**

WRNS. Third Officer. Worked as an air radio mechanic. Born 13/06/1923 as Hazel Marion Staples, her father was Sir Robert Staples, 13th Baronet. After the war she worked as an assistant-purser on the Southampton - New York route on the Cunarder, RMS Mauretania. She later owned a travel agency in Liverpool. In 1970 when her father died she married his land agent Harry HR Dolling and they moved to Lissan House, near Cookstown, to live with her mother. Widowed in 1986, Hazel lived alone at Lissan without





electricity save that generated by the water wheel at the house. She died in 2006 after a long battle with cancer. She donated her home (Photo above) to the Lissan House Charitable Trust. The house has been developed as a community and tourist asset.

# Every day is a Remembrance Day

***We will remember them***

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

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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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