

Church News Ireland



Image of the day – United in remembrance



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United in remembrance

Both Archbishops of Armagh and Primate of All-Ireland presided at a Service of Remembrance in Ranville War Cemetery at 4.00 pm on 7 June, representing the Churches that provided chaplains to The Royal Ulster Rifles.

For both battalions, casualties mounted up in the days following D-Day itself.

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Archbishops Remember D Day Chaplains Of Royal Ulster Rifles

Jack O'Brien, a Catholic priest from County Roscommon, landed on Sword Beach with 2RUR and later became a Catholic Martyr of Korea.

James McMurray Taylor, Church of Ireland, from County Fermanagh, landed by glider with 1RUR and buried the remains of his own soldiers as well as Germans during temporary truces in fierce fighting around Longueval.



The Archbishops also visited Pegasus Bridge, Normandy remembering the chaplains who inspired prayerful hope in the midst of war on D Day, The Archbishops said together: As war threatens the world, we stand for peace and reconciliation

Armagh



Leaders from civic and community life alongside members of the public gathered in St Patrick's Church of Ireland Cathedral, Armagh, on Thursday evening (6th June 2024) for a service of commemoration, recalling with gratitude, the sacrifice made by so many on the beaches of Normandy exactly 80 years ago.



The service was attended by **His Majesty’s Lord Lieutenant for County Armagh, the Earl of Caledon KCVO JP**; the **Deputy Lord Mayor of Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough, Councillor Kyle Savage**; aldermen and councillors of the borough; and representatives of the **Royal British Legion**, veterans’ associations and youth organisations.

In his introduction, the **Very Reverend Shane Forster, Dean of Armagh**, reminded the congregation that “D–Day was the largest naval, air and land operation in history, with allied soldiers, sailors and airmen working together to achieve a victory which was fiercely fought,” Dean Forster continued, “As we bring to mind the events of 6th June 1944, may we recommit ourselves to the cause of peace and justice for which so many fought and died, and by the grace of God, prove worthy of their sacrifice each day of our lives.”



An Act of Remembrance, which was followed by two minutes of silence, was led by Mr Stanley Burrows BEM, Vice-President of the Armagh Branch of the Royal British Legion.

While playing a Lament, the piper preceded members of the Combined Cadet Force and the Army Cadet Force who carried the Lamp Light of Peace through the Cathedral and placed it in the Sanctuary. The light from the flame represents the 'light of peace' that emerged from the darkness of war and the lamp is coloured red to represent the ultimate sacrifice made by so many on the beaches of Normandy, and throughout the Second World War.

The prayers of St Ignatius of Loyola and Sir Francis Drake, which were said during the Eve of Battle Dedication Service of Headquarters Second Army, in Portsmouth on 4th June 1944, were read by the Dean and the Very Revd Barry



Matthews, Administrator of St Patrick's Roman Catholic Cathedral.

The Bible readings were from Joshua 4:19–24 and Romans 8:35–39, with Psalm 46 and the anthems 'For the Fallen' and 'Expectans Expectavi' sung by the Cathedral Choir. The congregational hymns included 'God of grace and God of glory', 'Dear Lord and Father of mankind', 'God is love: let heaven adore him' and 'Guide me, O thou great Jehovah'.

In the course of his sermon, Canon Barry Paine spoke on wisdom from the past, courage for the present, and hope for the future. "We worship Almighty God and give thanks for so many young men prepared to die for a civilisation that was worth living in," he remarked. It is for today's young generation, he said, to remember "what was given up so



that we may have freedom.” Canon Paine added: “This life that we have got is so precious; life in Christ is much more precious. We need to tell of God’s faithfulness, the Christ that we have within, so that future



generations may come and sing his praises.” Canon Paine is a former army chaplain who amongst his various

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ministries was chaplain to the Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst.

A special collection to support the work of the Royal British Legion, and the Soldiers', Sailors' & Airmen's Families Association (SSAFA) was taken during the service.

At its close, a beacon was lit by the Lord Lieutenant in the grounds of the Cathedral looking east over Market Square, as part of a national initiative to remember the sacrifice made on 6th June 1944.

With thanks to Jonathan Hull for photography



Archbishop Eamon Martin Archdiocese of Armagh & Archbishop John McDowell Church of Ireland at a Service of Remembrance in Ranville War Cemetery

Clogher



People from across a wide area gathered in St Macartin's Cathedral, Enniskillen for the D Day Commemoration Service conducted by Dean Kenneth Hall with the sermon given by the Bishop of Clogher, Rt.Revd. Dr. Ian Ellis and attended by His Majesty's Lord Lieutenant for County Fermanagh, Viscount Brookeborough.

Following the service a beacon was lit in the grounds of the Cathedral.



Clergy representing the Church of Ireland, Methodist, Presbyterian and Roman Catholic Churches as well as the

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Padre from the Royal Dragoon Guards took part in the Service. Thanks to Roy Crawford photography





Trory Church which overlooks a wartime airport hosted a D Day commemoration service

The area around St. Angelo Airport, Enniskillen and Lower Lough Erne had a pivotal role in the Second World War. RAF St. Angelo was base to 133 Squadron RAF Spitfires and 134 Squadron Hawker Hurricanes with flying boats stationed at RAF Killadeas and RAF Castle Archdale.

On the morning of 8 June, St. Michael's Parish Church, Trory which overlooks the runway at St. Angelo Airport, hosted a service to commemorate the 80th anniversary of the D Day Landings.

They hosted the Pipes and Drums of the Royal Dragoon Guards and the service was led by the Rector, the Revd

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Mark Gallagher, who is also Airport Chaplain; the Revd Trevor Homfray-Cooper, Chaplain to Royal Dragoon Guards; Revd Robbie Robinson, Chaplain to 1 Ranger Battalion and the Bishop of Clogher, the Right Revd Dr. Ian Ellis.

The service was also attended by His Majesty's Lord Lieutenant for Fermanagh, Viscount Brookeborough and

Viscountess Brookeborough. Viscount Brookeborough read a message from the King

Derry

Clergy and parishes in the Diocese of Derry marked the 80th anniversary of D-Day at a number of services throughout the North West last week.

The Rector of the Balteagh Group of Parishes, Rev Rhys Jones and Glendermott Curate Rev Brian Robinson led a short Service of Reflection and Act of Remembrance at the WW2 pillbox at **Magilligan Point**. The service began at 7am on Thursday, which would have been around the time Allied Forces were landing on the beaches in Normandy and encountering fierce resistance from German troops.

Limavady Branch Royal British Legion hosted a D-Day 80 Act of Remembrance & Commemoration Service at Limavady War Memorial at 08.45am on Thursday. The D-Day Peace Flag was unfurled, and cadets read out the names of local soldiers who died during the landings. This was followed by a short Service of Thanksgiving, at which Rev Brian Hassan, the Branch Acting Chair, officiated.

On Thursday evening, Rev Sean Mc Clafferty, who's Chaplain to the **Strabane** Branch RBL, led a Service of Remembrance, Reflection and Commemoration to remember "those who gave everything in the pursuit of peace and justice in the Normandy Landings". The service was held at the War Memorial in Strabane.

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A special commemoration service will be held in **St Tida's Parish Church, Ballyscullion, Bellaghy** on Sunday 9th June at 11.30am. The two-minute silence will be observed and a Poppy Wreath will be placed. All are welcome. Medals and regimental regalia should be worn where appropriate.

Connor



The Royal Artillery Association, Regimental associations and the Royal British Legion were joined by Councillors and members of the public at the **Cenotaph in Coleraine** for a Service of Remembrance conducted by Rev Darren Collins, Rector of Killowen.

A remembrance service was held at the **Chaine Memorial, Larne**. The beacon was lit as the passenger ferry came into Larne Lough, sounding its horn the whole way into the harbour in respect and remembrance. Well done too to

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Trevor Hassin for piping at the Civic Service and Wreath Laying earlier at the Larne Cenotaph as well as at Chainé Memorial.

Down

The 80th Anniversary of the D-Day Landings was commemorated in Down Cathedral. The Cathedral's midweek Eucharist included hymns, poetry and readings drawn from the experiences of D Day veterans. Revd Adrian Dorrian, a Minor Canon of the Cathedral and the Area Dean of Lecale, gave a short address.

In the media

Irish Independent - Bishops pay tribute to Irish people who 'did their duty' on D-Day in 1944

The country's leading churchmen have paid tribute to the "extraordinary ordinary" Irish people who "did their duty" on D-Day eighty years ago, Sarah Mac Donald writes.

Photos - (i) The Archbishops and The Colonel of The Regiment at the Cross of Sacrifice (ii) Rev Andrew Totten chaplain to the Regimental Association presented the Regimental standards to the Archbishops at the service.



The Catholic Archbishop of Armagh, **Dr Eamon Martin** said, “It has been largely forgotten - perhaps



conveniently at

times – that tens of thousands of men and women from all over the island of Ireland served side by side during the Second World War.”

The Church of Ireland Archbishop of Armagh, **Dr John McDowell** and Dr Eamon Martin delivered their addresses at the Royal Irish Regiment Service of Remembrance at Ranville Commonwealth War Graves Cemetery, near Sword

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beach in Normandy on Friday afternoon. Ranville was the first village in France to be liberated on D-Day.

“As war and violence once more threaten to destabilise our continent and our world, Archbishop John and I stand here together at Ranville, witnessing to peace and reconciliation, to fraternity and common humanity,” Dr Martin said.

Dr McDowell recalled growing up in a housing estate in Belfast alongside veterans of the Second World War. Residents had been left physically disabled, usually having lost a limb. He said he could not remember any sense of bitterness among them.

He paid tribute to the **Revd James McMurray-Taylor**, a Church of Ireland chaplain who landed on Sword beach, on 6 June 1944.

“Although in every sense a hero, there is nothing of the heroic in his style and manner. He was a man dutifully doing his job. He received no special treatment when he returned to the Church of Ireland in 1947.”

In his address, Dr Martin said, “Fraternity and common humanity: that is what our brave and generous chaplains stood for in 1944.”

He recalled the life of chaplain **Fr John Patrick O’Brien** from Co Roscommon who joined the Columbans at 17.

Although he planned to serve as a missionary in the Far East, he was unable to take up his assignment due to the war. Instead, he opted to train as an army chaplain and was assigned to the Royal Ulster Rifles to accompany the D-Day

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invasion, landing with the Allies on Sword Beach, eighty years ago.

“The troops called him ‘the fighting padre’ because Jack had been a boxer in his student days, and several anecdotes are recorded of his positive attitude and good humour.

"They say he sometimes ‘visited the men in their dugouts for a few hands of poker, often with rum scrounged from the quartermaster,’ and once, when a newly arrived officer fainted and almost fell into an open grave during a burial, Fr Jack grabbed him, saying: ‘Now, there’s no need to be in a hurry. All in good time.’”

After the war Fr O’Brien was sent by the Columbans to Mokpo on the southern coast of South Korea where he was martyred by Communist North Korean forces in 1950 during the Korean War. His body was never found or identified.

D Day Roll of Honour

Remembering some of those who were there

+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

+BLACK, Robert

Royal Armoured Corps.Reconnaissance Corps, 61st Regt.
B Sqn., Corporal. 500623. Died 07/06/1944. Aged 26. Son
of Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Black; husband of Mary Jeannie

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Black, of Coleraine. Bayeux War Cemetery, Calvados, France

+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

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.

+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

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the late Mrs Chambers of Tullymore, Broughshane. His wife Sylvia and baby son resided in Swansea, Wales. Ranville War Cemetery, Calvados, France

+CHARLES, Allen

Support Company. Lance Sergeant, 7019670. Died 08/06/1944 in Normandy by 'friendly fire' in the same incident as Patrick Mullins (below). Aged 23. Son of Mr and Mrs Robert Charles of Londonderry; husband to Mavis of Weston-super-Mare, Somerset, Ranville 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

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

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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 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

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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).

+COYLE, John

Royal Ulster Rifles, 1st Btn. Sergeant. 7010276. Died 07/06/1944. Aged 34. Served in A Company and landed on DZ N at Ranville at 2100 hrs on 06/06/1944. Believed killed at Ste Honorine the following morning. From Ballyscullion,

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County Londonderry. Husband to Greta, Belfast. Ranville Cemetery, France

+DEMPSTER, Edward

Royal Ulster Rifles, 1st Btn. D Coy. 19 Platoon. Rifleman. Corporal. Died 07/06/1944. Aged 19. Born in Belfast, he was the son of James and Byers Dempster and husband to Betty of Westfields, Hereford. Remembered as a fine footballer. Hermanville War Cemetery, Calvados, France

+GLASS, Samuel

Royal Ulster Rifles, 1st Btn. Rifleman. 70200302. Died 07/06/1944. A former member of the Young Soldiers Battalion (Devonport). Served in A Company and landed on DZ N at Ranville at 2100 hrs on 06/06/1944. Killed in action, shot by a sniper, the following day. Son of John and Agnes Glass of Belfast; husband to Sarah of Grimsby, Lincolnshire. Ranville Cemetery

GORE, W J

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,

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when he retired and became a shipkeeper on board Caroline.

+GREER, Henry

Royal Ulster Rifles, 1st Btn. Lance Corporal. 6985178. Died 08/06/1944. Landed with 1st Royal Ulster Rifles by glider at LZ N near Ranville, Normandy on D-Day. Killed in action at the battalion's next objective, the town of St. Honorine. Fellow soldiers from the battalion gave him a field burial at Longueval. He was later reinterred at Ranville War Cemetery, Calvados, France. Cookstown WM

These entries are from records researched and compiled by Remembrance NI in preparing for a comprehensive Roll of Honour on D Day. For Remembrance Ni daily records see <https://remembrancenireland.org/>

Church News Ireland

The publication of Church News Ireland is overseen by Very Rev Dr Houston McKelvey OBE, QVRM, TD. He may be contacted at houstonmckelvey@mac.com