



remembrance ni



Ballymena RAF man lost in Wadden Sea in raid on Bremen

Records show that 38 Wellingtons were lost in the Wadden Sea area. One was Wellington X3724 KO-T from 115 Squadron, in which Sgt Thomas Edward Rowan (20) from Ballymena was the wireless operator



It was piloted by 25 year old Canadian F/Sgt Jack Hutchison (left) and was one of the aircraft dispatched from RAF Marham at 2328 hours on the 3rd of June to bomb the Port of Bremen.

In the early hours of the 4th of June 1942 his aircraft was intercepted by a German night-fighter. The Wellington crashed south-east of Vlieland and all five crew were killed.

The pilot, Jack Hutchison, and wireless operator, Terence McGrath, are buried at Texel, but their three colleagues have no known graves. Jack Hutchison was at 25 years old the eldest in the crew. Of his four crew mates, three were aged 20 and Eric Harding only 18.

The crew were - Sgt Jack Leon Hutchison (25) pilot from Niagara, Ontario, Canada, Sgt Terence Allen McGrath (20) the front gunner from Hull, Sgt John Turner Plant (20) the navigator, from Oncham, Isle of Man, **Sgt Thomas Edward Rowan (20) the wireless operator, from Ballymena**, and Sgt Eric Roland Harding (18) the rear gunner, from Gravesend, Kent.

Sergeant Jack Leon (Rip) Hutchison, the pilot, was the 25 year old son of Lawrence Hutchison, who kept a general store at Virgil, Niagara, Canada, & his wife Florence Hutchison (nee Prendergast). The couple had two sons, James Headley was born in 1916, and Jack Leon in 1917. Their father Lawrence died in 1921 aged only 34.



Rip attended the local public school, and High School, was a member of the school cadets, and worked on neighbouring farms during vacations. When he enlisted in the RCAF in December 1940, he gave his occupation as farm-hand, and carried a letter of recommendation from the last employer, his uncle H L Craise, who ran Denbrae Fruit Farm at St. Catherines. The farmer wrote in praise of his nephew, who had worked for him for two years, relating that because he did not have a son of his own, it was his understanding that Rip, and his own two daughters, would eventually run the farm.

Jack Leon Hutchison passed out in Canada as a pilot on September 1st 1941. He was then given 11 days embarkation leave before being posted to the UK on 18th September.

He arrived at the RAF reception camp, 3 PRC, based in Bournemouth on the Dorset coast, on September 28th, and

was posted to 20 Operational Training Unit at Lossiemoth, Scotland, on 6th October.

After six months of aircrew training, he was posted as a pilot on Wellington bombers, and now skipper of his own crew, to 115 Squadron on March 25th.

He took off on his last flight, from RAF Marham in Norfolk, on the evening of June 3rd, to bomb the port of Bremen. His aircraft was intercepted by a German night-fighter and crashed south-east of Vlieland. All five crew were killed. His body was recovered from the sea dike area, between Oude- and Nieuweschild on Texel, and interred on 13th June 1942. Den Burg/Texel, General Cemetery - plot K, row 6, grave 124. The family's text on the bottom of his grave stone at Texel island says: 'Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends'. Rip's mother Florence, visited the gravesite in the 1960s, and his brother, James (Jim) Headley Hutchison, some years later.

Brother died at the Bridge on the River Kwai

Sergeant Thomas Edward Rowan, the wireless operator, was the 20 year old son of Thomas Edward Rowan (1885) & Ellen Irwin, of Patrick Place, Ballymena Co. Antrim, Northern Ireland, who were married at Ballymena in 1911.

Two families had lived together at the house in Patrick Place from before the beginning of the 20th century. Thomas Edward Rowan senior's mother, Jane (bn 1854), was a widow with a family, when she married shoemaker William J



115 Squadron crest

Currie (bn 1844), who also had children, sometime before 1901.

One of Thomas E. Rowan senior's step-brothers, Samuel Currie (bn 1894), joined the 18th Battalion of the Royal Irish Rifles in July 1915. He died from battle wounds in November 1917.

Thomas and Ellen were to lose two sons in World War 2. Twenty year old Thomas, who was the wireless operator on Wellington X3724, has no known grave. He is commemorated on the Runnymede Memorial and on the Cenotaph in Ballymena Memorial Park.

His older brother, 23 year old William Erwin Rowan, also joined the RAF. He was serving with the RAF at Singapore when the Japanese invaded in 1942. The fighting in Singapore lasted from 8 to 15 February 1942.

After the Japanese successfully conquered the Malay Peninsula, the Allies began to transfer personnel in

December 1941 to Sumatra, and AC1 Rowan is believed to have to have been one of them. The large majority of the POWs who fell into Japanese hands in North and Central Sumatra were concentrated in the Uniekampong in Belawan harbour.

As early as May 1942 a large group of about 2,000 POWs were transported from there to Burma, and many were put to work on Burma-Siam railway. During its construction, approximately 13,000 prisoners of war, including British, Dutch and Australian servicemen, died and were buried along the railway. William Erwin Rowan died on 5th of August 1943 and is one of 1,379 casualties commemorated in the Chonk-Kai War cemetery which was built on the same spot as the notorious POW camp.

The text on his burial plaque at the **River Kwai's Chunkai War** cemetery, reads - 'Heavy the blow, quickly it fell. Tender ties broken without a farewell.'

On this day - June 04

1940

“We must be very careful not to assign to this deliverance the attributes of a victory. Wars are not won by evacuations. But there was a victory inside this



deliverance, which should be noted” - Winston Churchill

Churchill tells Commons ‘We shall fight on the beaches, in the fields, in the streets and in the hills. We shall never surrender.’



338,236 soldiers of the British Expeditionary Force were rescued from France by 861 ships and boats of the Royal Navy, Merchant Navy, private and Allied ships, 243 of which are lost. OperationDynamo was planned and executed by Admiral Bertram Ramsay (above)a remarkable achievement

Holiday camps are banned within 10 miles of east and south-east coasts of England and Isle of Wight.

German troops enter Dunkirk, taking 40,000 French prisoners and huge quantities of abandoned equipment, including 84,000 vehicles, 2,500 guns and 650,000 tons of supplies and ammunition.

French planes attack Munich and Frankfurt as reprisals for Paris bombing.

1941

Luftwaffe bombers carry out a night raid on the port of Alexandria in Egypt, killing 100 people. The Egyptian Cabinet resigns.

1942

Reinhard Heydrich dies of his wounds.
Hitler flies to Finland to meet with the Finnish head of state, Marshal Mannerheim.

Midway

At 4.30am aircraft of Admiral Nagumo's 1st Carrier Striking Force makes strikes against Midway.

The American garrison received prior warning of this from a spotter aircraft. This raid fails to sufficiently neutralise US airpower on Midway and so Nagumo orders a second attack against Midway.

His aircraft are in the middle of being rearmed with torpedoes for a strike against the US carriers, should they be spotted. The Admirals orders mean that the Japanese aircraft must first replace their torpedoes with bombs, before another strike against Midway can take place.

At 8.20am Japanese reconnaissance aircraft reported sighting the American carriers and at 8.55am warned that US torpedo aircraft had been launched and were on their way towards the Japanese fleet. While this is going on, the Japanese aircraft which had been sent out on the second strike against Midway, begin to return and by 9am had all been landed.

Crews were now swarming round the aircraft with fuel hoses and bomb racks in a desperate attempt to get them ready for a strike against the American Carriers.

At 9.30am the torpedo bombers from the Hornet and Enterprise found the the Japanese carriers, but by 9.36am they had all been shot down. The Hornet's and Enterprise's dive-bombers failed to find the Japanese carriers and so turned for home, although many ran out of fuel on the way.

A similar fate was suffered by all the fighters on this mission. The torpedo bombers of the Yorktown now found and attacked the Japanese carriers, but with the same result as the previous attacks and by 10am it all seemed to be over and Admiral Nagumo could prepare for his counter strike in

what seemed total safety.

However, because his fighters had been drawn down to sea level to deal with the Yorktown's torpedo-bombers, the sky above the Japanese carriers was left temporarily exposed to attack. At 10.25am a lost dive-bomber group from the Enterprise stumbled upon the undefended Japanese carriers. The 37 Dauntless dive-bombers plunged down in to the attack. With their decks cluttered with aircraft in the throws of being re-armed and refuelled, the Japanese carriers were in serious danger.

Admiral Nagumo's flagship, the Akagi was the first to be hit and a bomb started a fire in the torpedo store. This fire was so fierce that the Admiral had to abandon the Akagi and shift his flag to a destroyer. The carrier Kaga was hit next by four bombs, which set ablaze the ships aviation fuel and forced her also to be abandoned. The Soryu was hit as well, this time by 3 bombs. These started a fire on deck amongst the parked aircraft and also caused her engines to stop. In just five 5 minutes 3 Japanese carriers had been put out of action, but the agony was not yet over. At noon an American submarine found the stricken Soryu and sank her by torpedo. The Hiryu, which so far was undamaged, was ordered to withdraw at speed from the area in order to save herself. During her withdrawal the Hiryu managed to launch two strikes against the Yorktown at noon and 2.40pm, which caused severe damage to the Yorktown.

At 3.30pm Admiral Yamamoto gave the order for the Akagi to be scuttled by torpedo as it had not been possible to save her.

By 5pm the Kaga had also succumbed to her wounds and sank. At the same time the Hiryu's luck ran out when she was spotted and attacked by dive-bombers from the Enterprise. Hit by four bombs, the Hiryu was set on fire from stem to stern and had to be scuttled by her crew. Farther north, aircraft from the Japanese 2nd Carrier Strike Force bomb Dutch harbor in the Aleutians as planned, damaging the islands fuel tanks and a US ship. US efforts to locate this force are unsuccessful.

1943

The House of Commons rejects any lifting of the economic blockade against occupied Europe.

A Military coup takes place in Argentina, with the army occupying Buenos Aires.

Luftwaffe bombers attack the massive Russian tank factory's at Gorki.

1944 Irish Division - Brigadier Pat Scott:



"We lay in uninterrupted peace until the evening of the 4th when we were warned to send the Faughs towards Tivoli, a town some twelve months east of Rome..but this party died a natural death. Rome fell. The Germans were going north at full speed."

40 Commando RM lost 21 men

in action at Brac Miljet. The unit was operating off the island of Vis, carrying out raids against German positions on the Dalmatian coastline.

Fall of Rome American General Mark Clark had been ordered to break out of Anzio and take the opportunity to cut off and destroy a large part of the German 10th Army retreating from the Gustav Line between them and the Canadians. But this opportunity was lost on the brink of success, when Clark disobeyed his orders and sent his forces to enter the vacant Rome instead. Rome had been declared an open city by the German Army so no resistance was encountered.

Allied forces took possession of Rome on 4 June 1944.

The German 10th Army were allowed to get away and were responsible for doubling the Allied casualties in the next few months. Clark was hailed as a hero in the United States. The Canadians were sent through the city without stopping at 3:00am the next morning.

Eisenhower postpones 'Operation Overlord', the allied invasion of France, for 24 hours because of rough seas in the English Channel.

The RAF carries out heavy night raids against German coastal batteries and fortifications in Normandy.

U-505, patrolling off Cape Blanco on the West African coast is forced to the surface by depth-charges from the U.S.

destroyer escort Chatelain and is captured intact and towed to Bermuda by the escort carrier Guadalcanal. (More Info)

The U.S. Fifth Army enters Rome.

The first B29 (Superfortress) combat mission is made against the Bangkok railway.

1945

U.S. troops land on the Orikio peninsula of Okinawa.

US, Soviet Union, Britain and France agree to divide up occupied Germany

Roll of Honour - June 04

Representing their comrades who died on this day

1915

+GALLACHER, Charles M

RNVR. RND. Clyde Z 1876. Collingwood Battalion. Died 04/06/1915 Gallipoli. Enlisted in the RNVR 31/10/1914.

Collingwood Battalion 'D' Company 4th Platoon 04/03/1915 - 04/06/1915. Born Dalbeattie 24/01/1899. Son of Peter Gallagher, Springburn, Glasgow and Mary McAlpine. Londonderry, The Diamond WM. ADM339

+HEANEY, James

RNR. RND. Leading Seaman 299814. RFR/ B/ 5603. Howe Battalion. Died. 04/06/1915. Enlisted in RN 08/02/1902.

Enrolled in RFR 08/02/1914 ; Howe Battalion 09/02/1915.

Embarked with RND Expeditionary Force to Dardanelles.

“Leading Stoker Heaney - a member of Waterside

Presbyterian Church and Churchhill Loyal Orange Lodge

871 - had twelve years' service on the navy, and served with the naval division at Antwerp. His name was read aloud

during a special memorial service held in First Derry

Presbyterian Church, on Friday, August 4, 1916, to pay

tribute to the Presbyterian soldiers of the city of

Londonderry, who had died during the first two years of the

Great War." Son of William and Annie Heaney, Benvarden Avenue, Waterside, Londonderry. 1914 Star issued to father 06/03/1920. Husband to Ann who died 18/01/1932, and was interred in Glendermott New Cemetery. Helles Memorial, Turkey. Londonderry, The Diamond WM. Waterside - PCI RH. ADM33

+McQUILLAN, William

RN. RND. Stoker I. SS100594. Hood Battalion, RND. Died 04/06/1915. Gallipoli. Age 36. Enrolled RN 29/01/1904 for 5 and 7 years. Joined RFR 30/01/1909. Served from 09/08/1914 in Pembroke II and Victory IV (RND Hood Battalion 17/09/1914 - 04/06/1915). Reported KIA by Stoker A. Blackmore. Born Belfast 08/04/1880. In civil life he was a labourer. Husband to Sarah Ann McQuillan, Tenth St., Belfast. Shankill Rd Mission - PCI RH. Helles Memorial. IMR. ADM339 and ADM 188/1106/100594

1916

+ADAMS, R Mc F

Royal Irish Rifles, 12th Btn. Rifleman. 17119. Died 04/06/1916. Aged 20. Son of Edward John and Ellen Jane Adams, of 4, Castle Terrace, Larne Harbour. Forceville Communal Cemetery, Somme, France

1917

+ANDREWS, William James Morrison

RFC. Second Lieutenant. Died 04/06/1917. Age 26. Royal School, Dungannon 1903 - 08. He studied engineering in London and by December 1916 had joined the RFC.

Promoted to Second Lieutenant in May 1917 he began training as a pilot. He was killed in a flying accident on Salisbury Plain. He was the eldest son of Alexander and Violet Andrews of Woodvale, Ballymena. He was born at Cootehill, Dungannon 06/10/1890. His father, Alex was a tea merchant, formerly of Woodvale, Ballymena. They lived at Chapel Road, Dungannon. His father, Alex was a tea merchant. His three sons served. Second Lieutenant Arthur Andrews, formerly employed by the Belfast Banking Company in Coleraine and Belfast, and of Royal Irish Fusiliers, was severely wounded in the thigh on the 1st July 1916 during the fighting on the Somme. He had received his commission on 23/08/1915. Fred Stanley Andrews was commissioned in the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers. Drumcoo Cemetery, Dungannon. Dungannon WM. West Church Presbyterian Church, Ballymena RH.

+GAWLEY, Patrick

6 CR. Private. 3942. Died 04/06/1917. Born in Ballinderry, Co. Antrim, he lived and enlisted at Belfast Ypres (Menin Gate) Memorial, Belgium, panel 42.

+McILROY, WILLIAM

Royal Irish Fusiliers, 9th Btn. Private. 22984. Died 04/06/1917. Aged 20. Grandson of Catherine Nelson, of Rory's Glen, Kilwaughter, Larne. Pond Farm Cemetery, West-Vlaanderen, Belgium

1940

HMS FOYLEBANK

H.M.S. Foylebank was being used as an Anti-Aircraft Ship.

The ship was dive bombed and machine gunned by JU87 Aircraft when it was in Portland Harbour.

+BELL, Robert

Saloon Steward. H.M.S. Foylebank

+HEGGANE, E

Nav Aux Personnel. HMS Foylebank. Died 04/07/1940.

+McMULLAN, James Wilson

RNR. Sub Lieutenant. (E) HMS Foylebank. Died 04/07/1940. Liverpool Naval Memorial, Panel 2. Dunluce Parish WM

+POLLY, Robert George

Naval Auxiliary Personnel (Merchant Navy). Assistant Storekeeper. Died 04/07/1940. HMS Foylebank. Son of R Polly, Carmel St., Belfast. Had been employed by Federated Employers Assurance. (Belfast Weekly Telegraph 10/08/1940). Liverpool Naval Memorial, Panel 13

+WILKIE, David

Naval Auxiliary Personnel (Merchant Navy). Second Electrician. Died 04/07/1940. Age 38. HMS Foylebank. Joined in May and on July 8 his wife was notified he was missing. Husband to Elizabeth Wilkie, Grand Parade, Belfast. (Belfast Weekly Telegraph 17/08/1940). Liverpool Naval Monument, Panel 13

1942

+HARTE, James Henry

RAFV. Sergeant (Air Gunner). 1358088. Died 04/06/1942. Aged 20. 76 Sqdn. Son of Lotty Harte; grandson of Mrs. L.

Harte, of Portrush. Vlieland General Cemetery, Friesland, Netherlands

+ROWAN, Thomas Edward

RAFVR. Sergeant. 1111475. Died 04/06/1942. Aged 20, 115 Sqdn. At 23.28 on the night of 03/06/1942 he was in the Crew of Vickers Wellington X3724 KO-T which took off from R.A.F. Marham in Norfolk. They were on a mission to attack the Port of Bremen however KO-T was attacked by a Luftwaffe Night Fighter and was shot down, crashing south-east of Vlieland. Of the Crew of five men only two have graves.

Flight Sergeant Jack Hutchison who was 25 years old and the Pilot along with Sergeant Terence Allen McGrath, aged 20 years, who was Wireless Operator are both buried at Texel while the three remaining men have no known grave and their names are inscribed on the Runnymede.

Sergeant John Turner Plant, (20) Navigator, from Oncham, Isle of Man.

Sergeant Thomas Edward Rowan, (20) Wireless Operator, from Ballymena.

Sergeant Eric Roland Harding (18) Rear Gunner, from Gravesend, Kent.

Thomas was the Son of Thomas and Ellen Rowan, of Ballymena. Brother of William Erwin Rowan, RAF, who died on 05/08/1943 as a Japanese POW. Runnymede Memorial, Panel 92. Ballymena WM. West Presbyterian Church, Ballymena RH

1943

+EDWARDS, Percy James

Welch Regiment, 1st Btn. Private. 3960432. Died 04/06/1943 while a prisoner of war in Germany. Aged 26. It is likely that he was taken prisoner in North Africa. 1st Btn Welch Regiment entered a period of reorganisation soon after the first Battle of El Alamein. Son of Ernest Walter and Teresa Josephine Edwards; husband to Winifred Margaret Edwards, of Belfast. Berlin 1939 - 45 War Cemetery, Berlin, Germany

+QUILLAN, Alexander

RAF.Sergeant. 359508. Died 04/06/1943. Aged 44. Son of James and Isabella Quillan; Husband of Louise Quillan of Holywood. Holywood cemetery

1944

+DAVIES, William Idris

Royal Army Service Corps, 14 Gen. Transport Coy. Driver. T/140296. Died 04/06/1944. Aged 26. Son of William and Sarah Jane Davies; husband of Susan Georgina Davies, of Ballynahinch. Rhymney Cemetery, Glamorganshire, United Kingdom

1946

+GILFILLAN, Ronald Edgar

RAFVR. Leading Aircraftman. 1494233. Died 04/06/1946. Son of William and Mary Elizabeth Gilfillan, of Crindle, Co. Londonderry. Hamburg Cemetery, Hamburg.

1947

+STEWART, James Gordon

RAF. Leading Aircraftman. 650034. Died 04/06/1947. Aged 29. Son of James and Charlotte Stewart, of Strandtown, Belfast. Dundonald Cemetery

+TONER, V

Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, 1st Btn. Fusilier. 6977503. Died 04/06/1947. Aged 33. Son of William and Lena Toner; husband to Margaret Toner, of Armagh. Karachi War Cemetery, Pakistan

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 houston.mckelvey@btinternet.com

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houston.mckelvey@btinternet.com

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