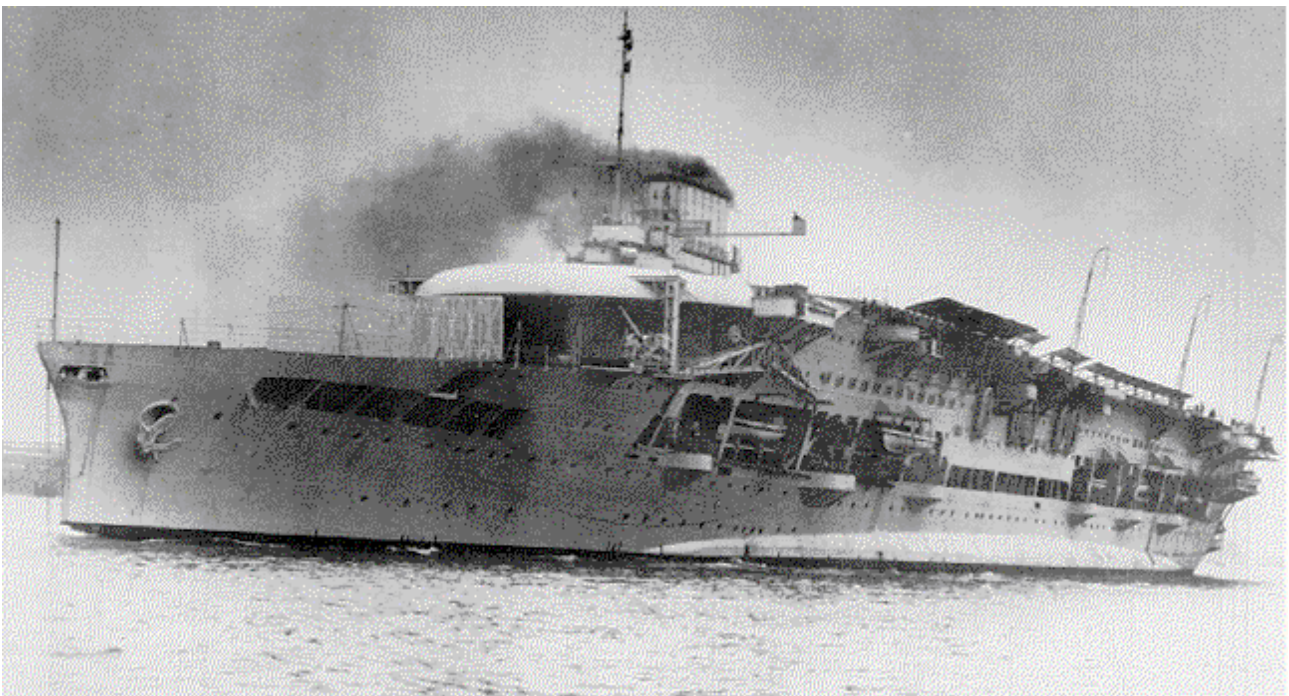




remembrance ni



Three ships lost off Narvik in two hours in 1940

On the afternoon of Saturday 8th June, 1940, the aircraft carrier HMS Glorious (photo above) and her escorting destroyers HMS Acasta and HMS Ardent were intercepted in the Norwegian Sea by the German battlecruisers Gneisenau and Scharnhorst. The three British ships were sunk by gunfire in a little over two hours, with the loss of over 1500 officers and men of the Royal Navy, Royal Marines, and Royal Air Force

Shortage of aircraft carriers

In view of the important role played by aircraft carriers in WW2 it is a deplorable fact that the Royal Navy at the outbreak of war found itself shorter of these ships than those of any other category. At the start it possessed five large carriers, HMS Ark Royal, Furious, Courageous, Glorious and Eagle. Only the first named was modern. Courageous was lost whilst on anti-submarine patrol in the Western Approaches a fortnight after the declaration of war. She had been escorted by two destroyers. Over 500 men were lost. Many naval air specialists are of the view that this was a case of an expensive asset being thrown away through being assigned to a duty for which she was not suitable.

After this loss it might have been thought that the utmost care would be taken to provide adequate escort for any other large carrier likely to be exposed to unusual risk. Yet in June 1940 the Navy learned with surprise and dismay that HMS Glorious, sister ship, of the Courageous, had been intercepted by a superior enemy force while returning from Norway practically unescorted. The lack of a German reaction to British operations in the Norwegian Sea lulled the Admiralty and the fleet into a dangerous sense of complacency. The carriers Ark Royal, Furious, and Glorious had, in the weeks preceding the action, repeatedly made the 2000 mile return trip to the Narvik area with only a destroyer escort. This was Glorious' fifth trip. The Admiralty appears to have taken the safety of these valuable and vulnerable ships for granted.

The Admiralty did not pass on their knowledge of German movements to operational forces at sea. Bletchley Park had warned the Admiralty that analysis of wireless intercepts indicated that German heavy units had left the Baltic and might be moving north into the Norwegian Sea. The Admiralty did not pass this information on to the fleet or RAF Coastal Command. Receipt of this information might have led Vice Admiral Air to refuse Glorious' request to proceed independently.

Glorious did not exercise adequate measures to protect herself and her escort from unexpected attack. Glorious should have had at least one aircraft aloft during the day. This would have given the ship visibility of at least 40 miles, allowing her to avoid interception and warn the fleet by W/T long before the Germans could have threatened her. At the very least, Glorious should have been prepared to launch aircraft on short notice once German forces were detected.

Operation Alphabet - The evacuation of Narvik

In the first four weeks of the Norwegian campaign almost the whole of our naval strength in home waters was engaged in escorting and carrying troops to and from Norway. With such efficiency was this work done that not a single soldier out of the thousands transported lost his life as the result of submarine or surface ship attack, and very few from air attack at sea.



Wartime colour photograph on the Scharnhorst

With the invasion of France on May 10, and the heavy demands of the Navy for help to that country, Belgium and the Netherlands, a sharp change came over the situation. With the evacuation of the British Army from Boulogne and Dunkirk, an exceptional strain was imposed on naval material, the majority of the available destroyers being either sunk or put out of action in these operations. Obviously, too, the threat of an enemy invasion attempt could not be ignored, imposing a further burden.

It was in these circumstances that plans had to be prepared for the evacuation of Northern Norway.

The evacuation of the Narvik area was mainly carried out in two groups; but owing to the variety of vessels employed, it proved impossible to concentrate them all in a single body on either occasion, some ships having therefore to rely mainly on diversive routing for their security. Despite these difficulties, the whole military force of 24,000 arrived safely in Great Britain.

The aircraft carriers Ark Royal and Glorious had been sent to Narvik from Scapa on May 31, the former to provide fighter protection during the evacuation and the latter to bring back from North Norway much-needed Gladiator and Hurricane aircraft of the RAF. There seems to have been a misplaced assumption that the Germans lacked enterprise, presumably because for some months previously carriers and other heavy ships had been crossing the North Sea independently without incident. For this reason the Glorious was not allowed to accompany the second large group of ships returning, as the Ark Royal did, but sailed independently. This unfortunate decision is understood to have been made on the grounds that otherwise Glorious would not have had enough fuel left to get home.

Thus at 03.00 on June 8 the Glorious parted from Ark Royal, which wore the flag of the Admiral (Air), in a position 17 degrees N. by 14 degrees 10 minutes E. She was accompanied by the destroyers Acasta and Ardent as an anti-submarine escort. Unfortunately they were sent tight into the jaws of the enemy.

No reconnaissance aircraft up

An enemy squadron, comprising the battleships Scharnhorst and Gneisenau, ships of nearly 32,000 tons each, armed with nine 11-in. guns, and the cruiser Admiral Hipper, of nearly 15,000 tons with eight 8-in. guns, had left Kiel on June 4 and passed Bergen at midnight on June 5-6. Their orders were to attack British convoys

proceeding from the Narvik area. No suspicion of their presence seems to have been entertained by British Naval



Intelligence; at any rate, neither the Flag Officer, Narvik, nor the C.-in-C., Home Fleet, was aware of it.

At 0800 hours on 08/06 the Admiral Hipper sank the tanker Oil Pioner and rescued 11 survivors. A little later she did the same with the empty transport Orama and the trawler Juniper, picking up 112 from these ships. Hipper put into Trondheim.

Soon after 16.00 on the same day the Glorious sighted the two German battleships, the Admiral Hipper having put into Trondheim. No reconnaissance aircraft were up, nor had any been flown since parting from the Ark Royal, or the encounter might have been avoided. As it was, the Glorious did her best to escape to the southward under cover of a smoke-screen laid by the two destroyers. Though this caused the enemy to cease fire for a time, the forward upper hangar had already been hit, destroying the Hurricane aircraft and preventing any torpedoes being got out before



HMS Glorious before the war

the fire curtains were lowered. About an hour after the enemy ships had first been sighted, a salvo hit the bridge of the Glorious, and further heavy hits were sustained about 15 minutes later. Soon after this the order was given to abandon ship, and she sank with a heavy list to starboard about 17.40. The carrier's armament of 4.7-in. guns was, of course, quite useless against two such powerful adversaries.

Both the destroyers were sunk, the Acasta about 17.28 and the Ardent at 18.08. They had duly fired torpedoes, one from the Ardent hitting the Scharnhorst abreast of her after 11-in. turret, inflicting severe damage. As the result of this, the Scharnhorst made for Trondheim under escort of her sister

ship, their cruise being abandoned. They took with them an officer and four ratings from the Glorious and one man from the Ardent as prisoner of war.

The Royal Navy knew nothing of the sinking until it was announced on German radio.

No intelligible report of the action was received by any British ship, though at 1720 the cruiser Devonshire nearly 100 miles to the westward picked up the beginning of a wireless signal addressed to the Vice-Admiral (Air) from Glorious. It must have been made as the ship was being abandoned. Unfortunately, with the exception of the Ark Royal, Southampton and Coventry, other ships in the North Sea were keeping wireless watch on a different wave frequency. This applied to the Valiant, which was then about 470 miles to the south-westward. On the morning of the following day that battleship made contact with the hospital ship Atlantis, which reported having seen a transport being attacked by the battleships Scharnhorst and Gneisenau, and the heavy cruiser Hipper.

This information was at once passed to the Commander-in-Chief at Scapa, who sailed with the Rodney, Renown and six destroyers to cover the convoys. First news of the end of the Glorious came from an enemy broadcast on June 9. Though diligent search was made for survivors, aircraft from the Ark Royal actually passed close over a number of men on rafts without seeing them. Owing to the heavy sea, which capsized the Acasta's boats, and the extreme cold, men soon perished, the total death roll in the three ships amounting to 94 officers and 1,380 ratings,

Roll of Honour - June 08

**Representing their comrades who died on this day
1915**

+BATTERSBY, Augustus Battersby

Connaught Rangers, 4th Btn. Lieutenant. Died 08/06/1915. Aged 30. He joined the Connaught Rangers in March 1914, 5 months before the outbreak of war. He was wounded and died of dysentery at Doula on during an Anglo-French offensive against the German Colony of Cameroon. Son of John Radcliff Battersby, Augustus lived in Antrim having been born in Loughbawn, Collinstown, Co. Meath. He resided at 30 Fountain Street. He was a member of Gwynns Temperance LOL 419. Doula Cemetery, Cameroon. Antrim District Orange Order WM.

1916

+GLASS, William Patrick

Canadian Infantry, Central Ontario Regiment, 4th Btn. Died 08/06/1915. Aged 30. Before enlisting, William had served 2 years with the A.M.C. and 3 months with C.P.A. Reserves. He enlisted on 23/09/1914 at Valcartier, Quebec. He was 5' 5" tall and single. Born on 05/07/1885, he was the son of Hugh and Elizabeth Glass, of Clogher, County Tyrone. He emigrated to Canada where he worked as a salesman. Ypres (Menin Gate) Memorial, West-Vlaanderen, Belgium. Clogher WM, St Macartan's Cathedral RH

1917

+ADDIS, Henry

Royal Irish Rifles, 11th Btn. (South Antrim Volunteers). Rifleman.17126. Died 08/06/1917. Enlisting in Lisburn, he served in 11 RIR with whom he embarked 11 RIR for France from Bordon in October 1915. Born in Derriaghy, he lived in Lisburn and Belfast, and before the war was employed by John Herd at Seymour Hill Bleachworks, Dunmurry. His family lived at Castlerobin just north of Lisburn. On the 23/06/1917 they had the following poem inserted in the Lisburn Herald. "He marched away so manly, His young head proudly held, His footsteps never faltered, His courage never failed. He sleeps in death, far, far from home, He owns a soldier's grave, Proud Erin's sons, o'er ocean foam, Have shown that he was brave." He was a member of Pond Park Red Cross Preceptory No.13 and a member of the UVF. Bailleul Communal Cemetery Extension, France

+MAY, F W L

Royal Irish Rifles, 11th Btn. (South Antrim Volunteers). Captain. Died 08/06/1917. Dranoutre Military Cemetery, West-Vlaanderen, Belgium. Whitehead WM

+ROCK, Hugh

Royal Irish Rifles, 11th Btn. (South Antrim Volunteers). Rifleman 12/1289.Died 08/06/1917. Born in Cloughmills, Co Antrim, he enlisted in Ballymoney. Hugh Rock was the postman at Cloughmills, and on enlisting, his sister agreed to take over his round until his expected return. Probably because his job had kept him fit, Rifleman Rock was often given the duty of being a 'runner'. These men had to hand-deliver dispatches from trench to trench when other forms of

communication failed. It was an extremely dangerous and hazardous task, and he was constantly under the threat of snipers and enemy fire. In early June 1917 Rifleman Rock was given permission to take leave. A week before he was expected home, word reached his family that Hugh had been shot while delivering dispatches. Spanbroekmolen British Cemetery, Belgium.

1940 - HMS Glorious & HMS Acasta

+ANDERSON, John

RN. Able Seaman. D/JX 148096. Died 08/06/1940. Age 18. HMS Glorious. Son of William John and Isabella Anderson, Killyleagh. Plymouth Naval Memorial, Panel 37. Killyleagh WM

+BARNES, Frank Charles

RN. Able Seaman. D/JX 150971. HMS Glorious. Died 08/06/1940. Age 20. He joined the RN aged 15 and a half. His parents had been notified that he was missing, probably a prisoner of war. His grandfather served in RN during WW1 and afterwards as a Coastguard. His father also served in WW1 in the RAF. Son of Francis and Florence Barnes, Thorn Chalet, Rocky Rd., Cregagh. Plymouth Naval Memorial, Panel 37

+BLACKADDER, George William

RN. Assistant Cook (S). D/MX 59576. HMS Glorious. Died 08/06/1940. Age 18. Son of George and Margaret Blackadder, Newry. Plymouth Naval Memorial, Panel 42

+BOARDMAN, William Bert

RN. Boy 1st Class. D/SSX 29146. HMS Glorious. Died 08 / 06/1940. Age 17. Son of Samuel and Isobella Boardman, Londonderry. Portsmouth Naval Memorial, Panel 39. Strand Presbyterian Church, Londonderry WM

+COOKE, Alexander

AB. D/SSX 16795. HMS Glorious. Died 08/06/1940. Age 22. On the afternoon of Saturday 08/06/1940, the aircraft carrier HMS Glorious and her escorting destroyers HMS Acasta and HMS Ardent were intercepted in the Norwegian Sea by the German battlecruisers Gneisenau and Scharnhorst. The three British ships were sunk by gunfire in a little over two hours, with the loss of over 1500 officers and men of the Royal Navy, Royal Marines, and Royal Air Force. Son of Alexander and Lizzie Cooke, Ballymena. Plymouth Naval Memorial, Panel 37

+CRAIG, John

RM. Marine. PLY/22447. HMS Glorious. Died 08/06/1940. Age 32. Son of Alexander and Margaret Jane Craig, Glynn. Plymouth Naval Memorial, Panel 43

+CURRAN, Andrew

RN. Able Seaman. D/SSX 20220. HMS Glorious. Died 09/06/1940. Age 22. On 9th June HMS Glorious and its escorting destroyers HMS Acasia and HMS Ardent were intercepted in the Norwegian Sea by the German Battle Cruisers, Gneisenau and Scharnhorst and sunk in little over two hours with the loss of over 1500 officers and men, including Andrew Curran. Only 45 men survived. The carrier was returning to Britain having evacuated RAF aircraft from

Norway. Plymouth Naval Memorial, Panel 37. Cookstown
WM

+DOAK, Alexander

RN. Able Seaman. D/SSX 24183. Died 08/06/1940. Age:20.
HMS Glorious. Son of William and Annie Doak,
Newtownards. Plymouth Naval Memorial, Panel 37.
Newtownards WM

+EAGLESON, Hugh Alexander,

RN. Able Seaman. Reported missing, following the sinking
of the Aircraft Carrier HMS Glorious on 08/06/1940. Son of
Hugh Eagleson, of Newtownards. Newtownards WM

+EMPSON, Alfred Walter

RN. AB. D/JX 150039. Died 08/06/1940. Age 19. HMS
Glorious. Son of Alfred Walter and Sarah Epton, Portadown.
Plymouth Naval Memorial, Panel 37

+FEE, John

Leading Seaman. D/JX 137138. Died 08/06/1940. Age 23.
HMS Glorious. Father served 14 years in RN. Mother
resident in Ardglass. (Belfast Weekly Telegraph 17/08/1940).
Plymouth Naval Monument, Panel 37

+FORSYTHE, John Norman

RN. AB. D/JX151446. HMS Glorious. Died 08/06/1940. Age
18. Son of John and Mary Forsythe, Belfast. Plymouth
Naval Memorial, Panel 37

+GRAFTON, Norman Maurice

RN. Ordinary Seaman. D/SSX 30787. Date of Death:
08/06/1940. Age: 21. HMS Glorious. Son of Thomas and

Mary Jane Grafton, Banbridge. Plymouth Naval Memorial, Panel 39

+HAWTHORNE, David

RN. Able Seaman. D/SSX 16591. Died: 08/06/1940. Age: 22. HMS Glorious. Son of David and Elizabeth Hawthorne, Belfast. Plymouth Naval Memorial, Panel 37

+KNOTT, Warren Patrick

RN. Boy 1st Cl. D/JX159678. HMS Glorious. Died 08/06/1940. Age 16. He had been taught at Darkley school by its principal John Malseed Scott, later RNVR, who was lost on HMS Ellesmere. Son of George and Margaret Knott, Darkley, Co. Armagh. Plymouth Naval Memorial, Panel 39

+LANDA, David Henry

RN. Able Seaman. D/SSX16190. HMS Glorious. 09/06/1940. Age 23. Son of Jacob and Ena Landa, Belfast. Member of the Belfast Jewish community. Plymouth Naval Memorial, Panel 38

+McDOWELL, Alfred George

RN. Ordinary Seaman, D/JX 151550. Died 08/06/1940. Age 18. HMS Glorious. Joined RN as boy at 14 years of age. Had 4 years service in Glorious. Member of University Rd., Methodist Church. Born on the day HM King George V opened the NI parliament and his father was presented to their Majesties. His brother Charles was serving with the RAF. (Belfast Weekly Telegraph 13/07/1940). Son of Alfred and Winifred McDowell, Belfast. Plymouth Naval Memorial, Panel 39.

+McNABB, William

RN. Boy Telegraphist. D/JX 158275. Died 08/06/1940. Age 17. HMS Glorious. Son of William James McNabb and Jeanie McNabb, Ballymoney. Plymouth Naval Memorial, Panel 39. Ballymoney WM

+SCOTT, David

RN. Ordinary Seaman. D/SSX 30791. Died 08/06/1940. Age 18. HMS Glorious. Son of Robert and Margaret Scott, Newtownards. Plymouth Naval Memorial, Panel 39. Newtownards WM

+SCOTT, Thomas

RNR: Seaman. P/X 18226A. Date of Death: 08/06/1940. Age: 27. H.M.S. Acasta. Son of Hannah Jane Shields, Ballymartin, Co. Down. Portsmouth Naval Memorial, Panel 44

+SHAW, Robert Thomas

RN. AB. D/JX150036. Died 08/06/1940. HMS Glorious. Son of Thomas Lewis Shaw and Norah Lily Shaw, Belfast. Plymouth Naval Memorial, Panel 38

+SHIELDS, Thomas

RNR. Seaman. P/X 18226A. Died 08/06/1940. Age 27. HMS Acasta. Son of Hannah Jane Shields, Ballymartin, Co. Down. Portsmouth Naval Memorial, Panel 44

+SHIRLEY, Alex

RN. Able Seaman. D/JX 148095, Died 08/06/1940. HMS Glorious. Carnany, Ballymoney. Plymouth Naval Memorial, Panel 38. Ballymoney WM

+THOMPSON, James

RN. Able Seaman. D/SSX 26153. Date of Death: 08/06/1940. Age: 19. HMS Glorious. Son of Robert Edmund and Margaret Thompson, Annsborough. Plymouth Naval Memorial, Panel 38

+WHITE, Joseph

RN. Able Seaman. D/SSX 20633. Died 08/06/1940. Age 39. HMS Glorious. Son of Joseph and Elizabeth White, Ballycraigy, Muckamore. (Belfast Weekly Telegraph) Plymouth Naval Memorial, Panel 38

1940

+GORDON, William John Gray

RAF. Aircraftman 1st Class. 616725. Died 08/06/1940. Aged 24. 802 Sqdn. Son of Joseph P. and Jamesina Gordon, of Islandmagee, Co. Antrim. Runnymede Memorial, Panel 25

1942

+McKINSTRY, John

RAFVR. Sergeant. 1040701. Died 08/06/1942. Aged 24. Sqdn 24. Son of James Flack McKinstry and Elizabeth Gault McKinstry, Larne. Heverlee War Cemetery, Vlaams - Brabant, Belgium

1944

+CHARLES, Allen

Support Company. Lance Sergeant, 7019670. Died 08/06/1944 in Normandy by 'friendly fire'. Aged 23. Son of Mr and Mrs Robert Charles of Londonderry; husband to



War cemetery at Bayeux, Normandy

Mavis of Weston-super-Mare, Somerset, Ranville War Cemetery, Calvados, France.

+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

+JEFFERSON, Norman

Royal Ulster Rifles, 1st Btn. Corporal. 7013019. Died 08/06/1944. Aged 26. Eight years' service. Three brothers also served. He landed on LZ N at Ranville at 2100 hrs on 6 June. Died of wounds on 8 June during the attack on Ste Honorine. A total of six men were killed and forty seven missing on this date. Son of Thomas and Sara Jefferson of Lisburn. Ranville War Cemetery, Calvados, France.

+McALLISTER, George

Royal Ulster Rifles, 2nd Btn. Rifleman. 7009594. Died 08/06/1944. Aged 37. He served in 'D' Company in Normandy on D-Day. He sustained a gunshot wound in Wood Gazelle at Cambes Wood. Son of the late George A McAllister and Elizabeth McAllister of 61 Berlin Street, Belfast. George Senior died as a result of wounds sustained in World War One in August 1916. George Junior was husband to Mary McAllister of Donegall Pass, Belfast. La Delivrande War Cemetery, Douvres, France. Fitzroy Presbyterian Church, Belfast, WM.

+MULLEN, Patrick

Royal Ulster Rifles, 2nd Btn. Rifleman. 7043313. Died 08/07/1944. Aged 33. Son of Patrick and Mary Ann Mullen, of Roslea, Co. Fermanagh, Northern Ireland; husband to Mary Ann Mullen, of Roslea. Hermanville War Cemetery, Calvados, France

+MULLINS, Patrick James

Royal Ulster Rifles, 1st Btn. Rifleman. 7019652. Died 08/07/1944. Aged 20. Served in the Anti-tank Platoon.

Believed to have been killed by 'friendly fire' on 8 June as a result of an artillery barrage from the guns of 3rd Division's artillery support. Son of Mary Mullins, he came from Lisburn. Ranville War Cemetery, Calvados, France.

+RANKIN, Andrew Hagan

RN. Ordinary Seaman. D/JX 565606. Died 08/06/1944. Age 24. HMS Lawford. Son of Frank and Annabella Rankin, Carrickfergus. Plymouth Naval Memorial, Panel 88. St Columb's Cathedral, Londonderry WM.

+SCOTT, Arland Kenneth

Royal Canadian Artillery. 12 Field Regt. Gunner. H/35621. Died 08/06/1944. Aged 26. Son of David and Sarah Scott; husband to Ellen Scott, of Donemana, Co. Tyrone. Brookwood Military Cemetery, Surrey

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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