



remembrance ni



Regina Trench Cemetery

Regina Trench Cemetery in the snow on the Somme battlefields. Regina Trench was captured by the Canadians and the battle of the Somme came to an end near here in November 1916.

Costly life-saving by Lurgan sailor

HMRNS Neptune and HMS Khandahar with other ships in a force from Malta entered an unmarked minefield with disastrous results.

Yeoman of Signals George McDowell from Lurgan was awarded the Albert Medal posthumous for bravery and devotion to duty saving life. His ship had gone to the assistance of the crew of another ship, most likely HMS Neptune, which had been sunk.

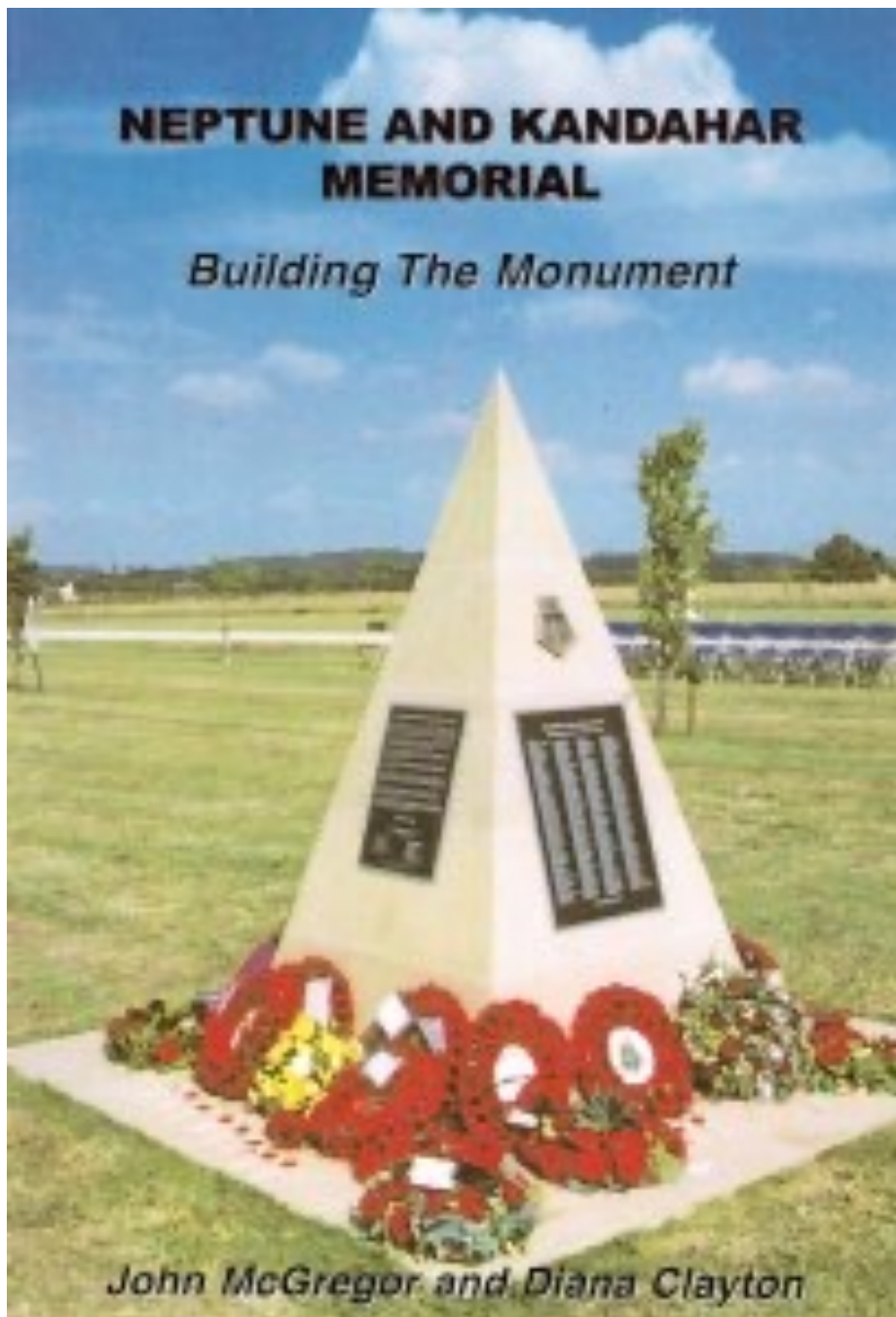
Yeoman McDowell went into the water and assisted many sailors to reach the rescue ship. Although he knew his strength was waning he refused to give up, and in company with another crew member, also awarded the Albert Medal, he gave his life.

The Albert Medal for Lifesaving was a British medal awarded to recognize the saving of life. It has since been replaced by the George Medal. George is commemorated on the Plymouth Naval Memorial and on Dollingstown WM.

Among those rescued from HMS Khandahar was James Magennis the only native of Northern Ireland to receive the Victoria Cross for service in WW2. It recognised his actions on 31 July 1945.

The other NI fatality in Khandahar was 21 year old Writer William Carson from Belfast. He was a former boy international soccer player. Before his naval service he was on the staff of Shell-Mex.

The memorial to the crews HMS Neptune and HMS Kandahar is a 7ft tall Derbyshire gritstone pyramid. It carries



plaques with details of those lost and the action in which they fell. It is located at the National Memorial Arboretum at Alrewas, in Staffordshire.

In July 2004, the decision was taken to build a monument to the men of HMS Neptune and HMS Kandahar who lost their lives in December 1941. By the

Spring of 2005, the monument had been erected at the National Memorial Arboretum. The memorial was unveiled on July 9th, 2005, in the presence of 400 relatives and friends.

A book on the building of the monument includes a Roll of Honour with all the names of Royal Navy and Royal Marine personnel of both ships including those from New Zealand and South Africa.

On this Day – December 20

1917

At the West of Messines the Germans capture a British advanced post in foggy weather.

1924



Hitler is released from Landsberg Prison. He's served just eight months for his role in the Beer Hall Putsch.

1939

The Russians cease their attacks at Summa, leaving Finnish forces in control of the whole Mannerheim defensive line, except the Oinala Bulge.

Captain Langsdorff of Admiral Graf Spee commits suicide.

“Let’s Help Finland” event held at Madison Square Garden, New York City.

1940

The Luftwaffe continues its attacks against British cities, this time hitting Liverpool.

No Italian troops are now left on Egyptian soil, except as prisoners.

1941

Propaganda Minister, Josef Goebbels broadcasts an appeal for winter clothing for the German troops on the eastern front.

German forces of Army Group Centre retreating from before Moscow reach a new defensive line more than 100km to the west, where, following strict orders by Hitler, they are to stand and fight off any further Soviet advances.

Admiral Royal E. Ingersoll takes over command of the Atlantic Fleet, from Admiral Ernest J. King who is appointed as Commander, US Navy

1942

The navigation and bombing radar aid ‘Oboe’ is used operationally for the first time by Bomber Command.

The Japanese bomb Calcutta for the first time.

1943

Franco disbands Falangist (Fascist) Militia in Spain.

US counter intelligence reports the smashing of a Nazi spy ring in Sicily. A 19-year-old ringleader 'Grammatico' and 27 others are arrested.

The heaviest raid of war on Frankfurt with more than 2,000 tons dropped by RAF. Mosquito raiders follow half an hour later to hamper the fire fighters efforts.

De Lattre de Tassigny meets de Gaulle in Algiers before taking command of 'Army B', for liberation of France.

The British reach the Maungdaw plain in Arakan, Burma.

1944

In their torturous advance toward the Meuse river, armored units of 6th SS Panzer Army capture Stavelot, searching for allied fuel dumps to replenish their nearly exhausted supplies of gasoline.

US terminates WASP (Women Airforce Service Pilots) program—returning combat airmen will perform their ferrying services; 1037 women served, with 38 fatalities.

Roll of Honour – December 20

Representing their comrades who died on this day

1914

+McLEAN, T

Royal Irish Rifles, 15th Btn. C Coy. Rifleman. 13094. Died 20/12/1914. Age 41. Husband of Jane McLean, of 43, Osborne St., Belfast. Carnmoney Cemetery

1915

+DEVLIN, John

Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, 1st Btn. Private. 44434. Died 20/12/1915. Age 19. Born Templemore, County Londonderry. Enlisted Derry. Son of Mr J. (possibly John Devlin, clothier, who died on December 20, 1924, and whose funeral was to Derry City Cemetery) and Mrs Ellen Devlin, and brother of James Devlin, 18, Long Tower Street, Derry. Helles Memorial, Turkey. Diamond War Memorial, Londonderry

1916

+McNEE, Thomas

RN. Sub. Lieutenant. Engineer, Mercantile Marine Reserve. HM Water Tank 'Progress'. Died 20/12/1916. Age 40.

Thomas McNee, 20, Barry Street, Londonderry, signed the Ulster Solemn League and Covenant (September 1912) pledging resistance to Home Rule for Ireland. Member of Claremont Presbyterian Church. Son of John and Fannie McNee, Ramelton. Husband to Mary Jane McNee, Barry Street, Londonderry. Plymouth Naval Memorial.

Londonderry, Diamond War Memorial. Claremont – PCI RH

1917

+ SMYTH, Samuel

RN. Seaman. J61607. HMS Dido. Died 20/12/1917.

Enrolled 05/11/1916 for hostilities. Served in Vivid, Renown and Dido. Born Londonderry 09/03/1898. ADM

188/770/61607

1940

+GRACEY, Herbert

RAF. Aircraftman 1st Class. 622561. Died 20/12/1940. Aged 34. Husband to Annie Gracey, Dromore. St. Colman's Roman Catholic Churchyard, Dromore

1941

HMS KHANDAHAR

CARSON, William John

RN. Writer. D/MX 67650. Died 20/12/1941. Age 21. HMS Kandahar. He had been a noted boy soccer player with international appearances against England, Scotland and Wales. He was on the staff of Shell-Mex Co.Ltd. Brother of Miss Ula Carson, Twaddell Ave., Belfast. (Belfast Weekly Telegraph 09/01/1942). Plymouth Naval Memorial, Panel 55

+McDOWELL, George Patrick

RN. Acting Yeoman of Signals. D/JX 143268. Albert Medal. Died 20/12/1941. Age 22. HMS Kandahar. He was awarded the Albert Medal posthumous for bravery and devotion to duty saving life. His ship had gone to the assistance of the crew of another ship, most likely HMS Neptune, which had been sunk. Yeoman McDowell went into the water and assisted many sailors to reach the rescue ship. Although he knew his strength was waning he refused to give up, and in company with another crew member, also awarded the Albert Medal, he gave his life. Son of Hugh and Elizabeth McDowell. Brother of Arthur McDowell, Ballymacateer, Lurgan. (Belfast Weekly Telegraph 14/08/1942). Plymouth Naval Memorial, Panel 50, Column 1. Dollingstown WM

1942

+WHITE, William

RN. Leading Seaman.D/JX 191465. Died 20/12/1942. Age 35. HMS President III (MV Otina). Husband to Margaret White, of Belfast. Plymouth Naval Memorial, Panel 64

VETERANS

HARVEY, John

RAF. MCB. Born 20/12/1922 Son of David H Harvey, Stranmillis Rd., Belfast. Post war Ormskirk, Liverpool

METSON, Gilbert Harold

Royal Corps of Signals. Lt. Colonel. Military Cross 20/12/1940. Born 1907. Joined Engineering Department of the Post Office, 1925; after a period in the Physics Laboratory he was transferred to regional work in Northern Ireland, where he also carried out research on magnetrons at Queen's University, Belfast

Served with Royal Corps of Signals in France, 1940; Commander, 11 Unit, Lines of Communication Signals, North Africa, 1942-1943, and Italy, 1943; General Staff Officer Grade 1, War Office, 1944-1945.

He donated to Liddell Hart Centre for Military Archives papers relating to the North African landings (Operation TORCH), 1942, principally comprising signal instructions, intelligence summaries and various maps and diagrams relating to wireless communication in North Africa, Oct 42.

Worked in Post Office Research Department, 1946, in charge of a group studying the causes of electronic valve failure; appointed Director of Research, 1965. Gilbert had one brother: Eric George Metson. Gilbert died in 1981.

Every day is a Remembrance Day

We will remember them

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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

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