



remembrance ni



**Sangro River War Cemetery, Italy, where rest the remains of Lance Corporal William McBride from Broughshane, who served with the Corps of Military Police, 1st (Airborne) Div. Today's veteran is Thomas Maxwell from Belfast and Newtownards who served with the Special Boat Squadron of the Royal Marines, seeing action from the Kola Peninsula in the Arctic to**

**Malta, India and Burmah. Four on today's Roll are buried in cemeteries in Northern Ireland.**

## **Royal Marine's outstanding SBS record in WW2**

Tommy Maxwell was born in Belfast on 16th May 1922 and on leaving school at 14 years of age he started work at Kiltonga Mill, Newtownards before joining the Royal Marines as a Boy Soldier in 1938 when he was 16.

Tommy was initially stationed in Portsmouth and was Sea Service Battery 62 before joining H.M.S. Cairo which was a C Class Cruiser. Within a year he was serving in Palestine in response to what was referred to as the "Arab Revolt".

In early April 1940 H.M.S. Cairo was involved in escorting the Military Convoy "NP 1" taking Troops to the landings at Narvik with Tommy being a member of one of the Gun Crews.

Later in 1940 Tommy was at Dunkirk and then was involved in assisting Free Polish personnel to escape their German occupied homeland before seeing action at Crete in 1941.

H.M.S. Cairo was part of the Irish Sea Force with Western Approaches Command until February 1942 when she left Greenock on 9th February taking a "Trade Delegation" to Murmansk for discussions with the Russians.

Having arrived at Kola Inlet on 15th they stayed until leaving on 18th to return safely to Scapa Flow and on to Greenock.

Following some repair to the ship in Belfast Tommy was aboard when it sailed to Gibraltar and from there was involved in Escort operations to Malta.

H.M.S. Cairo left Gibraltar on 18th April along with ten other Ships who were all escorting the American Aircraft Carrier U.S.S. Wasp with its valuable cargo of Spitfire aircraft for Malta!

In June 1942 Tommy again found himself in the Mediterranean having left Belfast on 3rd to provide Anti-Aircraft defence for Convoy WS19Z and was under attack starting 14th from Italian Aircraft and Submarine.

This action continued for the next few days with another ship (H.M.S. Liverpool) being damaged and having to return to Gibraltar.

On 15th H.M.S. Cairo was in action against Italian ships and was hit by 2 Six Inch Shells which caused serious damage as well as being subjected to air attack before finally reaching Malta on 16th.

This had been a considerable action with four of the merchant ships in the Convoy having been sunk during the voyage and then the Polish Destroyer Escort Ship O.R.P. Kujawiak was mined and sunk at the entrance to Valetta Harbour.

H.M.S. Badsworth and H.M.S. Matchless were so seriously damaged that they had to stay at Malta while the Cairo returned to Gibraltar on 19th for repairs to take place.

After a successful return trip from Gibraltar to Malta and back 11th August saw Tommy and H.M.S. Cairo again in



## **HMS Cairo in which Tommy Maxell saw several actions**

action when providing close escort for a Malta Relief Convoy.

On 12th August the ship was going through the Sicilian Narrows when it was hit aft by two Torpedoes which had been fired by the Italian Submarine Axum.

Being totally disabled H.M.S. Cairo was abandoned with survivors, including Tommy, being rescued by H.M.S. Wilton.

Tommy had been wounded during this action with shrapnel wounds to his right thigh and left calf.

He received treatment on board H.M.S. Kenya and amazingly the Medical Case Sheet says “Up and walking without pain. This man is fit for transit” On 14th August his Medical Notes show that he was discharged from the Military Hospital at Gibraltar.



Within just one week of having been wounded on board H.M.S. Cairo Tommy was again involved in a major operation, this time being the Raid on Dieppe.

Having been involved in the Special Service Brigade Tommy joined 44 Commando in 1943 and received training in Wales before going to Achnacarry.

In 1944 Tommy was serving with 3rd Cammando Brigade in India.

He operated for some time in the Pacific Theatre and Burma where, in 1945, he was shot in the head. He received treatment at various places including the Bombay Naval Hospital and Stoke Mandeville Hospital in England.

In 1946 Tommy was at the Royal Naval Hospital at Barrow Gurney near Bristol where he received Electric Shock and Insulin treatment for what is now referred to as Post Traumatic Stress and the effects of having been shot in the head a year previously.

He had been targeted by a Sniper who had secured himself in the top of a tree and Tommy's injury was such that he had a metal plate fitted in his head where the bullet had hit him above his right eye.

Tommy finally returned home having seen action in a wide variety of places and having been awarded a number of Medals. These are:-

The General Service Medal with "Palestine" Clasp; The 1939 - 1945 Star; The Atlantic Star; The Africa Star; The Burma Star with "Pacific" Clasp; The Italy Star; The Arctic Star; The Defence Medal; The 1939 - 1945 War Medal; The Dunkirk Medal,

The Malta George Cross Fiftieth Anniversary Medal and no less than five Russian Medals including the Ushakov Medal for British Veterans of the Arctic Convoys for which President Vladimir Putin signed the Decree on 10th March 2014.

This is the little "Active Service Edition" Bible which Tommy carried with him throughout the war and he is seen on the right with his Wife Georgie Maxwell. The photograph was taken in the 1950's when he was with the Territorial Army.

He received a Full Disability War Pension however his head wound and subsequent treatment caused him problems for the rest of his life but even after all this he joined the Territorial Army and served as a Sergeant Instructor in the early 1950's

Tommy died on 21st December 2011. His funeral was to Movilla Cemetery, Newtownards.

Acknowledgment - WW2ni.com

## On this Day – December 21

### 1914

British and Indian troops repel the Germans at Givenchy.

### 1939

During their brief period of comradeship, Hitler sends Joseph Stalin a telegram wishing him a happy sixtieth birthday.

## 1940

The RAF attacks Berlin, inflicting only minor damage.

The Admiralty decides to transfer another Battleship, HMS Malaya to Force H from the Mediterranean fleet. Again this was to be accomplished by escorting a convoy to Malta and linking up with units of Force H for the journey to Gibraltar. No losses were suffered to enemy action although a Destroyer was sunk when it hit a mine.

Bardia is surrounded by the 6th Australian Division, although the Italians are determined to fight it out.

## 1941



In convoy HG-76, U-751 sinks Royal Navy escort carrier HMS Audacity, which had kept away 12 U-boats for a loss of only 4 ships in the convoy, leading the Germans to change tactics when carriers were present.



HMS Audacity was converted from a captured German merchantman. One of the survivors was legendary pilot Eric 'Winkle' Brown who shot down his first his first German aircraft in a Martlet (Photo below) from her.





## **1941**

Typhus reported to be sweeping through the German forces along the Russian front.

The Axis launch a renewed air offensive against the Island of Malta.

## **1942**

Hitler refuses to let Paulus break out from their encirclement at Stalingrad.

British troops cross the Burmese border from India and head Southeast towards Akyab.

## **1943**

Under pressure from the Allies to curtail German espionage operations in the Irish Free State, Prime Minister Eamon de Valera confiscates the German embassy's radio transmitter.

The Eighth Army's 1st Canadian Division battles to capture Ortona in central Italy.

Russian forces smash the German bridgehead over Dnieper River at Kherson.

## **1944**

The U.S. First Army retakes Stavelot but to the south, the Germans surround and besiege Bastogne. Units of 5th Panzer Army capture St. Vith.

## **1945**

General George S. Patton dies at the age of 60 after being injured in a car accident on Dec.9th.

# Roll of Honour – December 21

*Representing their comrades who died on this day*

**1914**

**+MILLAR, David**

Royal Irish Rifles, 1st Btn. A Coy. Rifleman. 9202. Died 21/12/1914. Age 24. Son of the late John and Jane Millar. Born at Carrickfergus. Rue-du-Bacquerot (13<sup>th</sup> London) Graveyard, Laventie, France

**1915**

**+CUNNINGHAM, James**

Royal Irish Rifles, 18th Btn. Rifleman. 352. Died 21/12/1915. Succumbed to pneumonia in the hospital at Victoria Barracks, Belfast Husband to Elizabeth Cunningham, of New Bridge-street, Downpatrick. Buried in St. Margaret's Churchyard, Downpatrick. He left a widow, five daughters and a son, Samuel who was in the 13th Royal Irish Rifles. St. Margaret's Churchyard, Downpatrick

**+HENRY, James Wallace**

London Regiment (Prince of Wales' Own Civil Service Rifles), 1st/15th Btn. Private. 3209. Died 21/12/1915. Age 28. Son of Samuel Henry, Railway Road, Coleraine. Husband to Mabel Henry, of 16, Trinity Rd., East Finchley, London. Loos

Memorial, France. Terrace Row Presbyterian Church RH,  
Coleraine

**+WATSON, Andrew**

Highland Light Infantry, 15th Btn. Private. 13091. Died  
21/12/1915. Age 35. Disembarked France 23/11/1915. Born  
in County Armagh. By 1891 he and his wife were living in  
Glasgow. Husband of Mrs. Margaret Watson, of 92, John  
St., Bridgeton, Glasgow. Authuille Military Cemetery,  
Authuille, France

**1916**

**+COLGAN, Matthew**

Canadian Infantry, 75th Btn. Private. 139045. Died  
21/12/1916 as the result of shell wounds at No. 11 Canadian  
Field Ambulance. Age 25. Born 05/07/1891 in Tobermore,  
County Londonderry, the youngest son of James and Ellen  
Colgan. Matthew Colgan served with the Royal Inniskilling  
Fusiliers for three years. About 1912, Matthew Colgan  
moved to live in Toronto. Matthew was employed by the city  
of Toronto as a labourer before he enlisted. He was living  
121 Shaw Street along with his brother David. Cabaret  
Rouge British Cemetery, Souchez, Pas de Calais, France.  
Tobermore WM, Tobermore Church of Ireland RH

**+COX, William**

RNR. Sub-Lieutenant. HM Water Tank Progress. Died  
21/12/1916. Aged 37. Torpedoed. Only two weeks earlier  
Sub-Lieutenant William Cox had been home on leave and  
had spent a few days with his family in Bangor. William, a  
native of Belfast, had worked for Belfast Corporation Gas  
Department before going to sea on ships plying between the

UK and Australia. He served his apprenticeship on the old Belfast-built four-master *Walter H Wilson*. Afterwards he served as an officer on the *Port Denison* trading between London and Australia. Then he joined the Straits Steamship Company Singapore in which he rose to command several mail steamers. On the outbreak of war he joined the RNR commanding several ships mainly in the North Sea. William Cox was born on 23/06/1878 at 20 Mornington Street, Belfast. He was a son of Thomas and Sarah (nee Dickson) Cox who were married on 08/06/1877 in Fisherwick Place Presbyterian Church Belfast. William Cox and Maud Armstrong, a teacher, were married on 12/06/1907 in Elmwood Avenue Presbyterian Church Belfast. They later lived at Southwell Rd., Bangor. They had two children. Chatham Naval Memorial, Panel 18. Malone Presbyterian Church RH. Bangor RBL plaque

### **+FLOOD, Valentine**

\*RAMC 32nd Field Ambulance. Private. 46780. Died 22/12/1916. Valentine was a stretcher bearer in Gallipoli and was taken POW in 1915, he died in Gallipoli. Born 27/09/1888 Howth, County Dublin. Brother to John, James and Francis Flood, son of Anne and Valentine Flood. Baghdad (North Gate) War Cemetery, Baghdad

### **+McGEE, James**

Royal Irish Rifles. Rifleman. 5474. Died 21/12/1916. Age 17. Son of Henry and Ann Jane McGee, of 10, New North Queen St., Belfast. Church of the Holy Evangelists C of I Churchyard Extension, Carnmoney



## **+WHITE, William**

Royal Irish Regiment, 2nd Garrison Btn. Private. 2G/643. Died 21/12/1916. Age 19. He disembarked in France in February 1915, possibly with the Royal Irish Fusiliers and then transferred to the Royal Irish Regiment. He was wounded twice, and was discharged in June 1916. (Armagh Gazette 11/11/1916). Son of William and Mary White, of 23, Edwards Terrace, Armagh. St Patrick's Roman Catholic Cemetery, Armagh

## **1917**

## **+HAWTHORNE, Robert Newton**

New Zealand Expeditionary Force. Canterbury Regiment. 3<sup>rd</sup> Btn. Died 21/12/1917. Aged 19. Before emigrating to New Zealand his family lived at Granshaw, Bangor. Robert Newton Hawthorne was a native of County Down. He was a son of Samuel and Mary Jane Hawthorne who lived at Kurow, Otago in New Zealand. Press reports indicate that the Hawthorne family moved from Granshaw, Bangor to New Zealand around 1892 and that Robert was born on 27/01/1898 in Kurow, Otago, New Zealand. He attended Tawai School in the South Island of New Zealand at Glenavy – named after Glenavy in County Antrim, the birthplace of New Zealand Premier John Balance. After leaving school he worked on a farm at Hakataramea and then on the railway until he enlisted in 1915. Lijssenthoek Military Cemetery, Belgium

## **+KENNEDY, James**

H.M. Coastguard. Chief Petty Officer. 104021. Died 21/12/1917. Age 55. Born 15/03/1862 Carrigaline, Cork. Layde Parish Church Graveyard, Cushendall

## **+MAGOWAN, Thomas**

Cameronians (Scottish Rifles). 10th Btn. Private. 40144. Died 21/12/1917. Age 24. Born Tartaraghan. Enlisted in Scotland. Son of George and Isabella Magowan, of Eglis, Annaghmore, Co. Armagh. Faubourg D'Amiens Cemetery, Arras, France

## **+McMILLAN, David H**

Highland Light Infantry. Private 17271 transferred to Leinster Regiment Private 15092, transferred to Royal Dublin Fusiliers. 2<sup>nd</sup> Btn. Private 40048. Died of wounds on 21/12/1917. Aged 19. It was reported in the Press that David H. McMillan was an orphan who was placed in Newtownards Workhouse and subsequently boarded out in 1902 by the Newtownards Board of Governors. It was reported that he was four years old when he was placed with James McDowell who was a farmer in Kircubbin. James McDowell and his wife Margaret were in their mid-50s without any children of their own.

David McMillan was educated in Kircubbin and he won a silver medal for good conduct and drill proficiency as a member of the Boys' Brigade. After leaving school, David went to sea for two years and then he was 'engaged in railway work' in Glasgow. He enlisted and joined the Highland Light Infantry (No. 17271). Later he was

transferred to the Leinster Regiment (No. 15092) and then to the Royal Dublin Fusiliers (No. 40048).

Private David McMillan was 19 when he died on 21 December 1917 from the effects of gunshot wounds to the chest. David's foster parents James and Margaret McDowell who lived in *Rowantree Cottage*, Kircubbin placed a *For King and Country* notice in the *Newtownards Chronicle*. David was also remembered by his married sister, Mrs Toomath, who lived in Strandtown, Belfast. Tincourt New British Cemetery, France. Newtownards and District War Memorial. Kircubbin Presbyterian Church RH

**1939**

**+GAGE, Arol Alexander Courtenay**

RNVR. Lieutenant. HMS Bagshot. Died 21/12/1939. Aged 29. From Rathlin Island. Son of Rev Alexander Hugh Gage and Violet Agnes Evangeline Courtney Blake. Husband to Pamela Mary nee Milne -Thomson, daughter of brigadier Moray M Milne-Thomson. They married in 1936 at Woolwich, Kent. Portsmouth Naval Memorial, Panel 33

**1942**

**+FOSTER, Frederick**

RAFVR. Obs. Sergeant. 1074970. Died 21/12/1942. Age 26. Born in Lurgan on 01/02/1916. Son of Mr & Mrs A Foster, Market Street. He entered Lurgan College on 01/09/1925, probably one of the group transferring from Lurgan High School on its amalgamation with the College. There is no indication in the School register of when he left, nor is there

any indication of employment after school. He joined the R.A.F. when war broke out. Lurgan New Cemetery.

**+GILLAN, Patrick Joseph**

RAFVR. Sergeant. 1347529. Died 21/12/1942. Aged 25. 7 Sqdn. Son of Patrick and Margaret T. Gillan, Antrim. Void Communal Cemetery, France

**1943**

**+McBRIDE, William George**

Corps of Military Police, 1st (Airborne) Div. Provost Coy. Lance Corporal. 14217683. Died 21/12/1943. Age 36. Son of Robert James McBride and Agnes McBride of Eglis, Broughshane. Sangro River War Cemetery, Italy

**+McCARROLL, William**

RAFVR. Flight Lieutenant. 103019. Died 21/11/1943, while flying off the Italian coast. Aged 25. Born in 1918. He attended Ballymena Academy grammar school. Arts 1937 QUB. Son of William McCarroll and Minnie McCarroll of Belfast. In early 1943, William married Gwendoline Mary Sheridan from Enniskillen. Mary gave birth to a son also named William after her husband's death. Runnymede Memorial, Panel 120, Surrey

**VETERANS**

**ALLEN, James McGregor Allen**

RN. AB. J23707. Enrolled 21/12/1914 for 12 years. Boy service in Impregnable, Theseus, Vivid I, Caernarvon. OS and AB in Delphinium, Victorious, Suffolk and Invincible.



Invalided 15/10/1919. Born Londonderry 21/12/1896. ADM 188/694/23707

### **BRAMWELL, Frederick William**

RNVR. Lieutenant. DSC. In Oct 1943, HM MTB 675 dropped off an agent on to an island west of Askvoll, Norway. The boat was commanded by Lt Bramwell RNVR - an Irishman from Bangor, Co. Down, when she dropped off an agent on to an island west of Askvoll, Norway. The mission was to attack shipping in Askvoll harbour. Due to bad weather the boat had to lay up under camouflage until the weather improved. On Oct 16, whilst making a dash for home, she was attacked by 6 FW190s and was damaged. There were some casualties including a fatality or possibly more. MTB 675 returns to Dunbar, a distance of around 400 miles, on one engine and with no compass. The Gazette of 21/12/43, page 5545, records Operations off the Norwegian coast in which MTB 675 sinks a German midget submarine. The Gazette also records the award of DSC to Temp. Lieut 21/12/43 Frederick William Bramwell RNVR for operations off the Norwegian coast. Three further crew members were awarded the DSM. Bramwell was a former student of Bangor Grammar School

### **KELLY, Brian John Parmenter**

RNVR. Cdr. DSC 11/07/1940. T/Lieutenant to HMS Donats, a trawler mine-sweeper, 11/07/1940. Commanding HMS Lord Irwin (FY 1617), a trawler mine-sweeper 21/12/1940 - 03/1941. Commanding HMS Night Hawk (FY 1858) a trawler mine-sweeper 28/03/1941 - 15/02/1942. Motor Mine Sweeper MMS 11 (J511,). Bangor Grammar School. LLB 1946 QUB

**MAXWELL, Thomas**

Royal Marine. Service includes WW2. See article above.  
Died 21/11/2011.

**ROUNTREE, Charles Nelson Meredith**

Royal Artillery. Captain. MBE. Law 1934 QUB. Born  
28/05/1917, Monaghan, Ireland. Post war Chairman, County  
Tyrone Savings Committee. Son of James McFadden  
Rountree. Husband to Sylvia Catherine Mcfarland (1920 -  
1996). Died 21/12/1999 - Belfast, Northern Ireland

# Every day is a Remembrance Day

***We will remember them***

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masthead.**

**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 [houstonmckelvey@mac.com](mailto:houstonmckelvey@mac.com)

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