

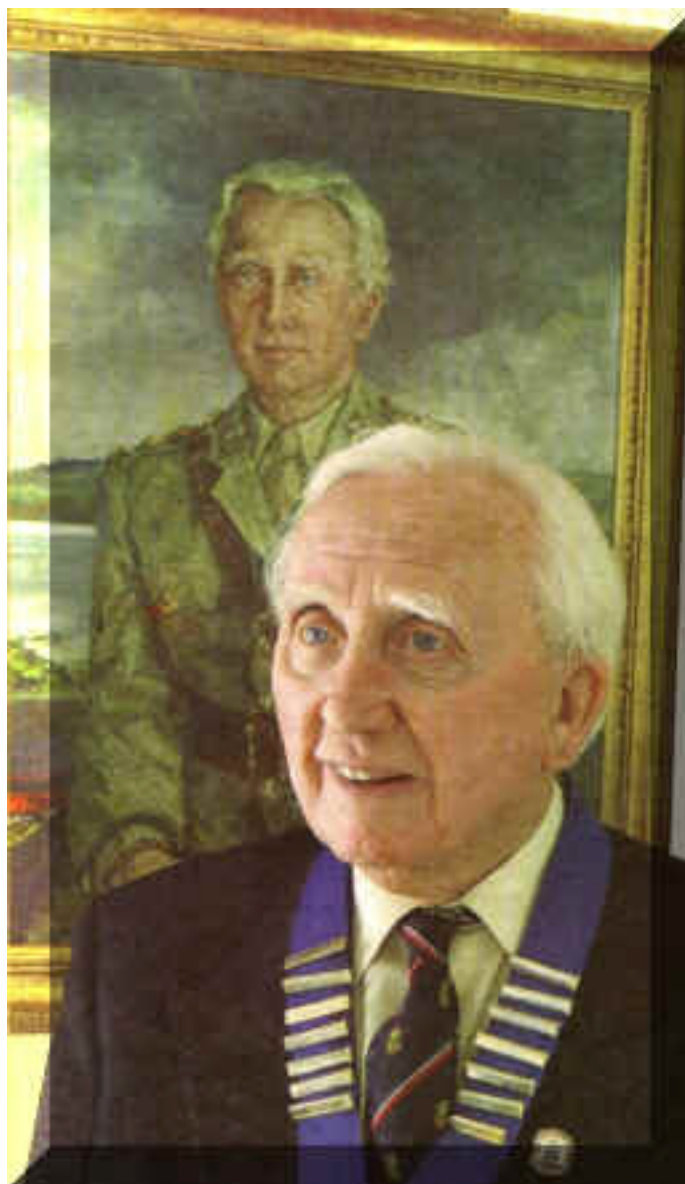


remembrance ni

## Colonel Harry Porter - Gunner at Dunkirk, Battle of Britain and Burma

Harry Porter joined the 8th (Belfast) Heavy Anti-Aircraft Regiment (Supplementary Reserve) in 1939 as a Gunner and went with the Regiment to France where it took part in the campaign in North West Europe in 1940.

Evacuated at Dunkirk, as a sergeant, he and the Regiment participated in the air defence of London during the Battle of Britain before moving to the Far East in May 1942, where they saw service in India and during the campaign in Burma 1943-45. By the end of the war he was a Major.



Demonstrating, not for the first time, or the last, a certain independence of mind, Porter, against Regulations, filmed many of the Regiment's activities in Burma. Later he raised a great deal of money for the Royal Artillery Association in Northern Ireland by showing a slightly expurgated version around the Province and more widely. Later still it attracted a good deal of media interest and it now resides in the Imperial War Museum.

On demob Porter joined the family business and in a few months was catapulted by circumstances into the role of managing director. He also joined the Territorial Army rising quickly to command 245 (Ulster) Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment at the age of 33. On an amalgamation he went on to command the newly-formed 245 (Ulster) Light Air Defence Regiment RA (TA). Later he became its Honorary Colonel and again on an amalgamation, moved to become the first Honorary Colonel of 102nd (Ulster and Scottish) Air Defence Regiment RA (V).

### **He arranged the first Lord Mayor's Show in Belfast**

Alongside all this he progressed in business and also took on a wide range of activities and appointments. As President of the Junior Chamber of Commerce he arranged the first Lord Mayor's Show in Belfast. He founded the Northern Ireland Paraplegic Association and after retirement, was Chairman of the Health and Safety Council for Northern Ireland. As a former top class swimmer - at all-Ireland and Army representative levels - he became President of the Belfast South End Swimming Club and remained so until his death. In his spare time he took part successfully in motor rallies around Ireland.

## **Founder the Royal Artillery Association in Northern Ireland**

On the military side too Porter was always active, founding the Royal Artillery Association in Northern Ireland and setting up the Gunner Luncheon Club which continues to meet. He was also President of the Dunkirk Veterans Association and the Burma Star Association.

In 1948 Porter married his war-time sweetheart, Marjorie, who survived him along with their two sons and a daughter. Always family orientated, in his latter years he took particular interest in his five grand-children.

Harry Porter was a man of tremendous energy and enthusiasm who, in whatever field of activity, always affected those around him positively.

In the end he achieved his wish "to simply fall off his perch". He died suddenly on 2nd January 2002 at his home on the shores of Belfast Lough. He was 82.

Acknowledgment - extracted from Gunner Magazine

## **The wartime service of the 8th (Belfast) Heavy Anti-Aircraft Regiment**

### **Recalled by Colonel Harry Porter**

The Regiment was mainly recruited in the Spring of 1939 in the aftermath of the Munich Crisis and largely comprised of young men from the City and District of Belfast. Many were colleagues from the same business offices and organisations; such as Gallahers, Belfast Corporation, Banks, etc. Being Supplementary Reserve, it was mobilised

before the Territorial Army and at Action Stations manning Anti-Aircraft Guns in the Belfast area prior to the official declaration of war on 3rd September, 1939.

In October the Regiment left Belfast for Practice Camp in Cornwall, firing the guns for the first time as a unit and, after a short embarkation leave, sailed from Southampton to Le Havre, joining the British Expeditionary Force in Northern France before Christmas 1939 in exceedingly cold weather conditions.

The three Batteries and Supporting Units were soon dispersed to undertake battle commitments over a wide area of the Allied Front in Northern France. Following the German Panzer-Blitzkrieg in May, 1940, all units were soon in action against the German Army and the Luftwaffe. The fortunes of war resulted in evacuations from Dunkirk, Cherbourg, St. Malo and other ports during late May and early June. One Battery successfully brought back three of their 3.7 AA guns and some vital gunnery instruments in spite of having received orders to blow them up. On returning to England the Regiment occupied gun positions during the Battle of Britain, the German Raids on London and Teeside, prior to a period of intensive mobile training covering most parts of the United Kingdom.

In the Spring of 1942 the Regiment embarked in the Belfast built line RMS 'Britannic' sailing in convoy with Royal Naval escort including the famous Battleships HMS 'Rodney' and HMS 'Nelson'. After a long voyage covering the North and South Atlantic it arrived in Durban, South Africa, where a welcome and hospitable stay of ten days was made necessary by engine trouble before finally reaching Bombay. The guns and equipment arrived at Karachi and

both elements assembled in Lahore before driving some 2,000 miles in convoy down the Grand Trunk Road to Calcutta. Action stations were taken up there and in East Bengal across the Ganges/Bramaputra Rivers before moving south into Burma to join the XV Corps in Slims' 14th Army which became part of Lord Mountbatten's South East Asia Command.

On arrival in the Far East members of the Regiment quickly realised that the Japanese were not the only enemy when experiencing the monsoons, mud, mosquitos, flies, malaria and, in turn, dense jungle and intense heat. The Regiment took part in the Arakan Campaigns over a period of some two and a half years firing effectively against the Japanese Air Force and even more extensively against ground targets when their long range and accuracy earned them the nick name of 'The Twelve Mile Snipers'. Some elements took part in the famous Battle of the 'Admin Box' at the Ngakyedouk Pass when, surrounded by the enemy, the guns were kept firing until the siege was lifted. Members of the Regiment are proud that several of their comrades received awards for gallantry as a result of this heroic stand which was the turning point in the Arakan Battles. The ultimate success of the Burma Campaign, together with those of South-East Asia and the Pacific, precipitated by the atom bomb attack on Japan, resulted in the surrender of the Japanese in August, 1945.

Unfortunately, there were many comrades in arms who were called upon to make the Supreme Sacrifice and are resting in British War Cemeteries in France, Belgium and in the Far East. A Memorial Tablet in memory of the men of the Regiment who died in the Arakan Campaigns was unveiled in Saint Marks, Akyab, at Easter, 1945. This little battle-torn

Church was one of the first to be retaken in all Burma and men of the Regiment assisted in restoring the fabric of the building.

'When you go home  
Tell them of us and say  
For your tomorrow  
We gave out to-day'

When peace was declared the Regiment embarked at Madras on yet another Belfast built ship, the RMS 'Stirling Castle', and eventually took part in a farewell Parade and March Past in Belfast in the Autumn of 1945. This was the last official parade of the Regiment in the City. However, many members came together again in 1947 when the Territorial Army was re-formed and so helped to continue the spirit of the 8th in the new organisation - the successor of which is one of the most efficient and enthusiastic units in the Volunteer Reserve today.

It is a fact that war brings people closer together and members of the Regiment have always been proud to wear the 'Red Hand of Ulster' on their uniforms and to have had an 'esprit-de-corps' second to none. Service in this well led and proud unit has resulted in many lifelong friendships being formed resulting in business partnerships, marriages between families and other ties and connections. Well attended Annual Reunion Dinners are held in Belfast and in London where contact is maintained with those members from the Mainland, who joined during the war fitting in so splendidly and who were proud to become part of the Regiment in every way.



The Regimental Benevolent Fund, raised by families and friends during the war, has been able to assist many of those who require a helping hand.

Whilst 'anno-domini' is taking its toll we like to think that the unique spirit of the 8th will remain until the last member was 'shuffled off this mortal coil'. If a little of its magic touches the next generation, it will have been inspired by the enthusiasm and devotion of duty to those who, at a critical time in our History, were privileged not just to be in the 8th Regiment, but to be the Regiment itself.

Acknowledgment - Jim Lennon

### **8th Belfast HAA Regt. aka The Twelve Mile Snipers**

Part 1 of Harry Porter's films on You Tube. Links to two others, thanks to Jim and Mary Lennon.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y0385ZvMVno>

## **On this Day – January 2**

**1915**

**THE WITNESS FRIDAY JANUARY 2**

**AN ULSTER V.C.**

**CAHANS MAN'S HEROISM.**

One of the former members of Cahans Congregation, in the person of Sergeant, now Second Lieutenant, David Nelson, youngest son of the late Mr. George Nelson, of Darraghland,

is amongst the list of the first nine heroes of the present war to whom his Majesty the King has been graciously pleased to approve of the grant of the Victoria Cross.

The War Office, in recording the incident of heroism which gained for him the coveted distinction, states -- "Sergeant Nelson (now Second Lieutenant) helped to bring the guns into action at Nery on 1st September, in spite of heavy concentrated fire from a distance of 600 yards, and, while severely wounded, remained with them until all the ammunition was expended, although he had been ordered to retire to cover."

There were, it appears, only four of Lieut. Nelson's battery left out of the entire number, and the glorious stand made by that battery is a story of heroism and self-sacrifice in keeping with the best traditions of the British Army, and one which reflects the highest honour met only on its four survivors, but also on all their dead comrades, for, although they were outnumbered ten to one, they succeeded in silencing the German guns.

Only four wounded men were left, and one of those dauntless four was David Nelson. He was twice wounded -- once with a gunshot, and in the other case with a shell, which also badly injured him, breaking two of his ribs and penetrating one of his lungs. We are pleased to say that the operation which he underwent in England has been entirely successful, and he has now practically recovered, so much, so that a fortnight ago his health, was good enough, and his nerves were sound enough and strong enough to permit him to lead his bride to the altar at Woolwich, amid the general rejoicing and congratulations of the garrison. We understand that lieutenant Nelson, accompanied by his bride, hopes



very soon to be able to visit his old home in Darraghland, where his brother and sister still reside, and spend some days there before again going on active service, and we are sure that they will be accorded a vary rousing and enthusiastic welcome as soon as ever they set foot on Cahans soil.

Lieutenant Nelson was, in the days of his youth, a regular attendee upon public worship in Cahans, and one of the most diligent scholars in the Sabbath-school. Before leaving Cahans to enter on his term of apprenticeship in Monaghan, previous to his joining the Army, he was a scholar in the Sabbath-school class taught by Mr. Oliver, still a teacher in the Sabbathschool.

## **2nd January 1915 Belfast Newsletter**

### **16th Battalion Royal Irish Rifles**

Over 50 recruits have joined the 16th Battalion Royal Irish Rifles (2nd County Down Volunteers) during the present week, bringing the total strength up to 574 officers and men. Sergeant-Major Bell, a Lurgan man, who since its formation has been on of the most popular officer connected with the battalion, has been promoted to a lieutenancy and transferred to Aldershot, where he takes up duty as quarter-master of the 9th Yorkshire and Lancashire Regiment. His successor in the 16th battalion has not yet been appointed.

A pipe band has been formed in connection with the battalion, and is very much appreciated by the soldiers and

the Lurgan public. An effort is being made by officers to inaugurate a brass band.

## **1932**

Japanese forces in Manchuria set up a puppet government known as Manchukuo.

## **1936**

In Berlin, Nazi officials claim that their treatment of Jews is not the business of the League of Nations.

## **1940**

Charles Edison (son of Thomas) becomes US Secretary of the Navy.

## **1941**

Royal Navy bombards Bardia in North Africa day and night.

## **1942**

The 28 nations at war with Axis powers pledge to make no separate peace deals

The Red Army achieves a breakthrough at Rzhev.

British troops are outflanked by the Japanese at Kampar in Malaya and begin to withdraw to the river Slim.

Japanese troops enter Manila and the U.S. Naval base at Cavite falls as US-Filipino forces retreat into the Bataan Peninsula.

British and South African troops take Bardia, Libya after a long siege.

Thirty-three members of a German spy ring under Fritz Duquesne are convicted in the largest espionage case in US history.

US Army orders 300,000 D-ration chocolate bars from Hershey, designed to melt at higher temperatures and not taste too good, so

## **1943**

Romanian dictator Ion Antonescu meets with Hitler and expresses concern about the unfolding disaster at Stalingrad.

Germans begin a withdrawal from the Caucasus.

The allies take Buna in New Guinea.

The Libian port of Tripoli is closed to Axis ships due to Allied bombing.

## **1944**

Hitler's Chancellery is reported 75 per cent destroyed with many trapped in the shelters below after a direct hit during an RAF raid on Berlin.

Wing Commander John Cunningham makes it 19-all with Wing Commander J. R. Braham in night-fighter air-ace's 'league'.

US Marines land at Saidor in northern New Guinea.

## **1945**

Danish saboteurs wreck a V2 factory in Copenhagen.



## **Death of Admiral responsible for the Dunkirk evacuation and naval forces on D-Day**

Admiral Sir Bertram Ramsey dies in plane crash near Paris. Four Royal Navy staff (Cdr Rowell, LtCdr Lewis, Lt Henderson, PO Morgan) died with him when their plane crashed on take off from Toussus-le-Noble near Paris. Ramsay was responsible for the Dunkirk evacuation and naval forces on D-Day. Sir Bertram becomes the fourth prominent allied leader to die like this.

American Sikorsky helicopter is used in convoy escort for first time.

# Roll of Honour – January 2

*Representing their comrades who died on this day*

**1917**

## **+CAMPBELL, Samuel J**

Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, 10th Btn. Private. 19860. Died 02/01/1917 of wounds. Age 25. The 10th Btn. was attached to the 109th Infantry Brigade. Born on 09/10/1891 in Toberhead, Castledawson. Samuel was one of thirteen children of John and Mary Campbell. He worked on his father's farm which he left to enlist at Finner Camp, County Donegal. Bailleul Communal Cemetery Extension in Nord, France. Castledawson WM, Castledawson LOL 96 RH

## **+McWHA, Archibald John**

Royal Flying Corps. Lieutenant. Accidentally killed on 02/01/1917. Aged 24. Born on 07/03/1892. He was the third son of Dupré and Martha McWha (nee Harris) of India, late of Bedford. He was educated at Bedford School. In 1911 Archibald was an Engineering Apprentice at the Queen's Engineering Works and he, his mother and his brother Norman were living at 75 Ashburnham Road, Bedford. Lieutenant Archibald John McWha is commemorated on the family grave headstone in Bangor Abbey Graveyard where

his date of death is inscribed as 02/01/1917. Shorncliffe Military Cemetery, Kent, England

### **+TOWNSEND, Joseph Ernest**

Royal Flying Corps, 66<sup>th</sup> Squadron and 1<sup>st</sup> Btn Worcestershire Regiment. Second Lieutenant. Died in an aircraft accident on 02/01/1917 (aged 25). Second Lieutenant Townsend was killed and his observer was severely injured in a flying accident in Gloucestershire: 'The aeroplane when at a considerable height suddenly swerved and dropped nose downwards to the ground, the machine appearing to side-slip when banking during a turn. Second Lieutenant Townsend was dead when extracted from the wreckage; the observer was taken to hospital in critical condition'. Born on 15/02/1891 in Belfast Road, Lisburn, County Antrim and he was a son of Joseph and Mary Townsend (nee Trill) whose marriage was registered in the first quarter of 1888 in Birmingham, Warwickshire. Joseph Townsend was born in England and Mary Trill was born in the Orkney Islands, Scotland. Joseph Townsend Senior worked as a gardener and he and Mary had five children, two of whom died in infancy. The Townsend family lived in Derriaghy; in Bangor and in England. Before the War, Joseph Ernest Townsend worked as a tinsmith in England. Bristol (Canford) Cemetery, Gloucestershire, England. Commemorated on the Memorial Plaque in St Comgall's C of I Parish Church, Bangor, Co Down

**1920**



**+FERRIS, William**

Royal Engineers. Sapper. 59104. Died 02/01/1920. Age 39. Born at Belfast. Served in the South African Campaign. Husband to Florence Alice White (formerly Ferris), of 13C, Theatre St., Battersea, London. Streatham Cemetery

**+KENNY, William David**

39th Garhwal Rifles. Lieutenant. VC. Killed in action at Kot Kai on the 2nd January 1920. Born on the 1st February 1899 at Saintfield, Co.Down. Jandola Cemetery, Pakistan. Dehli Memorial, India. Memorial in Donaghadee church

**+McALLISTER, William John**

Royal Engineers. Pioneer. WR/353997. Died 02/01/1920. Age 52. Husband of Mary F. McAllister, of 101, Sydney St. West, Belfast. Carnmoney Cemetery

**1941**

**+HUNTER, William James Graham**

RNPS. Stoker. LT/KX 108031. Died 01/02/1941. HM Trawler Bervie Braes - was completed on 28/12/1917 and taken over by the Admiralty in March 1940. Husband of Emma Hunter. Falmouth Cemetery, Cornwall. Portadown WM

**1943**

**+LOVE, David**

Royal Irish Fusiliers. Sergeant. 7006373. Died 02/01/1943 in Lurgan hospital after a long illness. Age 52. He served 21 years with the Royal Irish Rifles and the Royal Irish

Fusiliers. Lived with his wife and five children in Little Barrack Street, Armagh. Son of Robert James Love and Rachel Love; husband to Aileen Caroline Love, of Aylesford, Kent. St Mark's C of I Churchyard, Armagh

**1944**

**+McLAUGHLIN, Edward Colhoun**

Royal RAFVR. 2204122 . Died 02/01/1944. 100 Sqdn. Edward (Ted) was the son of Edward and Jeanie McLaughlin, Ballyronan. Prior to the war he worked in Walsley, England with his uncle in his grocer's shop. During the war he flew numerous missions over Hanover, Bocum, Hagen, Munich, Kassel, Stuttgart, Dusseldorf and Berlin. His plane did not return from an operational sortie on the night of Sunday, 2/3 January 1944. His sister Margaret was serving in the Royal Navy in HMS Caroline in the latter years of the war. She was notified by the Red Cross that the location of his remains were unknown. Runnymede Memorial, Panel 232. St John's C of I Church, Woods, Ballyronan. Rainey Endowed RH

**+O'MAHONY, Joseph Clement**

RAFVR. Sergeant (Air Bomber). 1795144. Died 02/01/1944. 207 Sqdn. Hanover War Cemetery, Niedersachsen, Germany. QUB WM

**VETERANS**

**BRADBURY, William**

RN. Surgeon Rear Admiral. DSO CBE. MB QUB 1908. Medical Officer RN. Medical Officer in Charge of the Royal

Naval Hospital Haslar for D Day. He had seen action at Gallipoli in WWI and was awarded the DSO for his actions in saving life.

Served at Medical Unit, Crystal Palace 19/12/1914. Hawke Battalion, Royal Naval Division. Crystal Palace 02/01/1915. Blandford 20/02/1915. Hawke Battalion MEF 10/05/1915 (Gallipoli). Archive reference: ADM339

Press report: Lisburn Surgeon wins DSO. "Surgeon (acting Staff Surgeon) William Bradbury, MB., RN., in recognition of his services with the Royal Naval Division in Gallipoli and France. As medical officer of the Hawke Battalion, Royal Naval Division, in Gallipoli, he did exceptionally good work, often under the most taxing circumstances.

"Surgeon Bradbury is the younger son of Mr. Samuel Bradbury, Pear Tree Hill, Lisburn. He is an old Queen's man, and after taking his degree in 1908 entered the Naval Medical Service. He went to China in 1912, and for his services during the rebellion of 1913 was decorated by the Chinese government (for services to the Chinese wounded). Early in the present war he served on a mine-sweeper (HMS Circe), and subsequently with the Royal Naval Division at the Dardanelles (where he was wounded in June, 1915) and in France." - Lisburn Standard 28/06/1918.

In WW2 William Bradbury was in charge of Haslar Naval Hospital which was at the leading edge of the medical response to D-Day. At the time of D-Day Haslar was staffed by Surgeons and Dentists of the Royal Navy Medical service and Royal Navy Dental service. Nursing duties were undertaken by nursing sisters of the Queen Alexandra's Royal Navy Nursing Service (QARNNS) and ladies of the

Voluntary Aid Detachment (VAD's) Sick berth Staff (SBA's) and Wardmaster Officers (commissioned Sick Beth Staff) who administrated hospital wards and departments.

In the lead up to D-Day members of the QARNNS were deployed to the frontline and hospital ships. The Haslar detachment of staff were joined by 140 nursing members of the VAD's, a number of Pharmacists were also drafted in and trained as Sick Berth staff. Surgeon Rear Admiral William Bradbury CBE. DSO. MB.Bch. BAO RN. died 22/10/1966. Aged 81.

### **McCREADY, William**

Canadian Forces. 45th Overseas Battalion. Sergeant. 424409. William enlisted in the Canadian Overseas Expeditionary Force on 02/01/1915 at Brandon, Manitoba. He was wounded in the knee in the Spring of 1916 on the Western Front in France. He was born on 05/12/1888 in Portstewart and as a young man he emigrated to Canada. Prior to joining up he was employed as a signal fitter in Manitoba. His parents were Mr. Daniel and Mrs. Mary Jane McCready who lived at Burnside, Portstewart. He is commemorated on Portstewart Presbyterian Church's Roll of Honour and the Roll of Honour of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland.

### **McMULLAN, Reginald**

RN. Petty Officer. 236837. HMS Marlborough. Jutland. Enrolled 27/12/1906 for 12 years. Re-engaged 04/08/1920. Served to 02/01/1928. War service in Vivid and Marlborough (01/02/1914 - 03/12/1918). Born Belfast 27/12/1888. ADM 188/420/236837

# Every day is a Remembrance Day

***We will remember them***

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masthead.**

**Information about individuals who served - please  
forward to remembrance ni at email below**

**remembrance ni**

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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](mailto:houstonmckelvey@mac.com)

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**Please forward** - information about those who served - names, regiment, ship or unit, date of death to [houstonmckelvey@mac.com](mailto:houstonmckelvey@mac.com)

