



remembrance ni



Bertaucourt Communal Cemetery

Bertaucourt Communal Cemetery is located on the outskirts of the village of Pontru in the Aisne region of France. There are now 71, 1914-18 war casualties commemorated in this site. The dead were largely of the 1st Northhamptons and the 2nd Royal Sussex, killed on the 24th September, 1918.

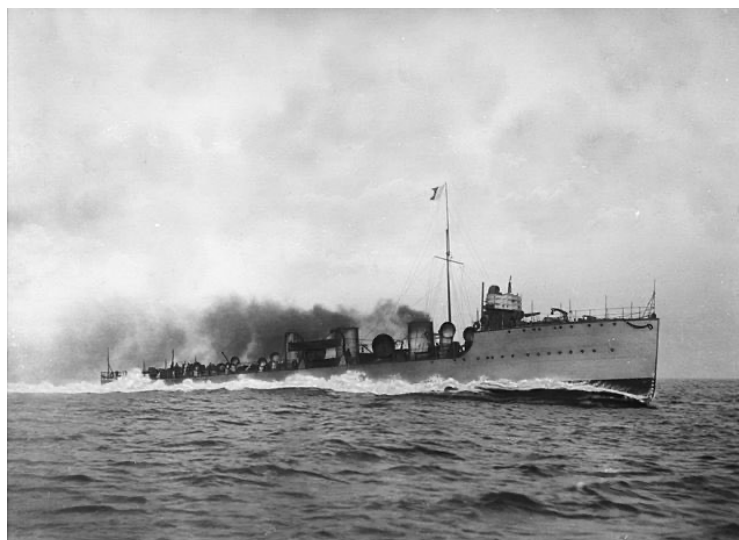
Pontru was taken on the 24th September, 1918, before the Battle of the Canal du Nord.

On this Day – February 8



1916

374 lives were lost when the Amiral Charner was sunk by German UBoat "U-21" (Lt Cdr Otto Hersing who sank British battleships "Triumph" and "Majestic" off Gallipoli ten months earlier). off the Syrian coast. Only one man out of 375 aboard was saved.



1917

The Royal Navy Tribal Class Destroyer HMS Gurkha (Photo above) is sunk by a mine off Dungeness. Only 5 of the 79 man crew survived.

It is reported that the British have taken Hill 153 Saily-Saillisel ridge (Somme) along with the capture of 78 German prisoners.

1942

Albert Speer is appointed as Reich Minister of Armaments and War Production. It was under Speer's direction that Germany's war production continued to increase despite massive Allied bombing.

1918

The Lisburn Standard

Brought in wounded under shell fire

The acts for which 40252 Private T. Blake, R.I. Rifles, Lisburn, was awarded the D.C.M. were gazetted this week as follows:--

For conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty as stretcher-bearer in bringing in wounded under heavy fire on many occasions. He recovered all the wounded from the front of the line after an attack, though the bearers were being continually sniped at.

Sailed for Egypt

Lieut. A. D. Guyer Bidlake, grandson of Mr. Alex. A.

Richardson, Aberdelghy, Lambeg, has sailed for Egypt, where he has received an appointment in the R.E. Lieut. Bidlake joined up in 1914, and has seen much service in France. His younger brother, Christopher, has passed into the R.N.V.R. as midshipman.

1941

Laval declines Petain's offer of Cabinet seat in the Vichy Government.

The first convoy of the newly formed Afrika Korps under the command of Lieutenant General Rommel leaves Naples for Tripoli in Libya.

Force H from Malta bombards Genoa, without hindrance from the Italian Navy or Air force.

The House of Representatives passes H.R. 1776 by a vote of 260 to 165.

1942

Albert Speer is appointed as Reich Minister of Armaments and War Production. It was under Speer's direction that Germany's war production continued to increase despite massive Allied bombing.

The Soviet North West Front finally cut all land communication for 90,000 troops of the German 2nd and 10th Corps at Demyansk, as the 11th and 1st Shock Armies link up on the river Lovat, about 25 miles to the west of Demyansk.

The Japanese land on the western side of Singapore Island,

encountering only minimal resistance.

1943

The Russians take Kursk and continue their advance.
Japanese complete their evacuation of Guadalcanal leaving the island in Allied possession after a prolonged campaign.
The American victory paved the way for other Allied wins in the Solomon Islands.

1944

The Australians complete the occupation of the Huon Peninsula in New Guinea.

Plans for invasion of France, Operation 'Overlord' are confirmed.

The Russians capture of Nikopol. The surrounded German forces in the Korsun pocket are invited to surrender by the Russians.

The RAF uses a massive 12,000lb bomb 'Tall-Boy', in a raid on the Gnome-et-Rhône works in Limoges.

The Australians complete the occupation of the Huon Peninsula in New Guinea.

1945

Operation Veritable - 50,000 British and Canadians troops with 500 tanks and 1,034 guns launch a new offensive into the Reichswald, to the Southeast of Nijmegen. Lt Gn.

Horrocks commanded XXX Corps

Koniev breaks out of his Oder bridgehead north of Breslau,

with six armies.

Generalmajor Karl Marthinsen, the head of the State Police is assassinated in his car at Blindernveien, Oslo by the resistance movement, Milorg. The Germans execute 29 Norwegians in retaliation.

UK civilian war casualties up to September 1944 are reported as 57,468 killed and 89,178 injured.

Paraguay declares war on Germany.

Roll of Honour – February 8

Representing their comrades who died on this day

1915

+PATTERSON, Thomas

Royal Irish Regiment, 5th Btn. Private. 5/2807. Died 08/02/1915. Aged 31. Thomas was a blacksmith. Son of William George and Margaret Patterson, of Drumreagh Hill; husband to Letitia Patterson (nee Wade), father of a 1 year old daughter, Violet, of Newmills, Dungannon. Tullaniskin (Holy Trinity) C of I Churchyard. Newmills Parish Church WM. Dungannon WM, Newmills LOL 183 RH

1916

+DEVLIN, John

Royal Dublin Fusiliers, 9th Btn. Serjeant. 13022. Died 08/02/1916. Age 30. John was born in Barrow-on-Furness in England. John's father died and his mother remarried to

John Downey, who lived in Leitrim, Castledawson. The family were farm labourers. John Devlin enlisted in Glasgow. He had been a reservist and rejoined shortly after the outbreak of the war. Son of Mary Devlin/Downey, of Leitrim, Castledawson. Lapugnoy Military Cemetery, France.
Castledawson WM

+FRENCH, W

Irish Guards, 1st Btn. Private. 8741. Died 08/02/1916. Age 38. Son of William and Ellen French, of 4, Belair St., Belfast. Merville Communal Cemetery, France

+HEANEY, John Joseph

Connaught Rangers, 6th Btn. Private. 6/3780. Died 08/02/1916. Age 22. Born 02/05/1895 in Magherafelt. Eldest son of Charles and Elizabeth Heaney, of Queen St., Magherafelt. Lapugnoy Military Cemetery, France.

+MOORE, Edward

Royal Irish Rifles, 1st Btn. Rifleman. 9176. Died 08/02/1916. Son of Henry Moore, of 30, Hunter St., Belfast. Sailly-sur-la-Lys Canadian Cemetery, France

1917

+CALDWELL, Alexander

RNVR. Stoker 1st Class. K32160. HMS Ghurka. Died 08/02/1917. Aged 33. Born 20/02/1884 at Loughton, Londonderry. Son of Joseph and Cathrine Caldwell, Calligan Lane, Londonderry. Brother of James, John and Josephine. Portsmouth Naval Memorial. Londonderry, The Diamond WM. ADM 188/931/32160

+CRAIG, David

Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, 1st Btn. Private. 3024. Died 08/02/1917. Age 23. Son of William and Sarah Craig, of 42, Lendrick St., Newtownards. Theipval Memorial, France

+LEWIS, Archibald

Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, 1st Bn. Private. 22444. Died 08/02/1917. Age 30. Enlisted May, 1915. Son of Charles William Lewis, of Ebley, Stroud, Glos.; husband of Edith Kendall Lewis, of Greencastle, Londonderry. Grove Town Cemetery, Meaulte, France

+ORR, John

Royal Irish Rifles. 1st Btn. Rifleman. 13541. Died 08 / 02/1917. Age 20. Son of Frank and Sarah Orr, of Poleglass, Dunmurry. Guards' Cemetery, Combles, France

1919

+FINNEY, J

Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers. 11th Btn. Lieutenant. Died 08/02/1919. Age 29. Son of John and the late Martha Finney, of Corbet, Banbridge. St Andre Communal Cemetery, France

+JOHNSON, Samuel Clement

Royal Field Artillery. Lieutenant. Died 08/02/1919. Age 40. Son of Col. W. E. Johnson (I.M.S.) and Elizabeth Jane Johnson (nee Smith). Born in Newcastle, Co. Down. Links with Annalong. Bournemouth (Wimborne Road) Cemetery.

1941

+McNABB, Hugh Denis

RAF. Sergeant. 628246. Died 08/02/1941. Aged 21. 269 Sqdn. Son of Hugh and Sarah McNabb, of Downpatrick. Runnymede Memorial, Panel 48

Bertaucourt Communal Cemetery

1942

+BELL, Gerald Mavor

A.I.F. 2/18 Bn. Australian Infantry. Private. NX41008. Died 08/02/1942. Aged 35. From Bangor. He emigrated to Australia in 1923. Having been an agricultural labourer he joined the Australian Army in June 1940. Son of Francis and Agnes Bell, of Bangor, Co. Down. Singapore Memorial, Singapore. Australian WM. Bangor Grammar School RH

+WRIGHT, Jean Dibby

WAAF. Aircraftwoman 2nd Class. Died 08/02/1942. Daughter of William Grant Wright and Mary Victoria Wright, of Portaferry, Co. Down. Nottingham Crematorium

1943

+FIELD, Arthur Donald

RNVR. Signaller. P/LD/X 4414. MiD. Died 08/02/1943.



Age 24. HMS Bredon. Son of Sidney Field and of Henrietta Field (nee Smith). Husband to Janette Kathleen Field, Belfast. Portsmouth Naval Memorial, Panel 80

+GIVEN, Hugh MacIvor

RAF. Flight Lieutenant. 112706. Died 08/02/1943. Aged 28. 27 Sqdn. Ballymena Academy. MB, B.Ch. BAO. QUB 1940. Before the outbreak of war, he practised in Belfast, Omagh, Dungiven, and on the Ards Peninsula. Hugh joined RAF 27 Squadron in 1941. This new RAF 27 Squadron formed in India on 19 /09/1942. They flew Bristol Beaufighters on ground-attack sorties over Burma and on anti-shipping strikes. While home on leave, Hugh Given married Margaret Helen Thompson of The Warrens, Broughshane, Co. Antrim in 1942. Known as Helen, she was from Yorkshire but lived in Broughshane and taught at Downpatrick High School, Co.

Down. Hugh Given died only four months after his wedding to Helen. Son of Robert Given JP and Kathleen Given of Markstown, Cullybackey; husband to Margaret Helen Given, of 'The Warrens', Broughshane, formerly of Cantley, Yorkshire. Ranchi War Cemetery, India. Ballymena WM. QUB WM

1944

+ANDERSON, David Waters

Royal Artillery. Bombardier. 1569930. Died 08/02/1944. Aged 26. 21 Bty., 8 H.A.A. (Belfast) Regt. Son of Archibald and Margaret Anderson, of Methil, Fife. Taukkyan War Cemetery, Myanmar. Regimental WM and RH, St Anne's Cathedral, Belfast

+ANDERSON, Norman. Alexander

King's Shropshire Light Infantry. 1st Btn. Private. 6984621. Died 08/02/1944. Age 29. Born at Queen Street, Coleraine on 27/07/1914 to Archie Anderson, Fowl Dealer and Penelope Anderson nee Elliott. 3 years before, in 1911 the family were living in house number 12, New Market Street, Coleraine. Norman's parents, 6 elder siblings and 2 boarders were in the house. The children were James, Elizabeth, Archie, Alice, Florence B & John Noel. The boarders were William Maxwell and William Wallace.

Following his education at Coleraine Academy and Garvery College, Belfast, Norman joined Northern Bank on 1st March 1935 at Head Office. Transfers followed to Head Office – Chief Cashiers (1938), Newry (1935) and Connswater (1939). In June 1940 he was granted permission to enlist. On 31/10/1940, Anderson was 'Called

up for Active Service' and joined the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers with Service Number 6984621. Cassino Memorial, Italy. Family headstone. Agherton Cemetery, Portstewart

+BULLER, Ernest

Royal Artillery. Gunner.1468868. Died 08/02/1944. Aged 30. 21 Bty., 8 H.A.A. Regt. Son of Thomas and Mary Jane Buller, of Belfast, Northern Ireland. Taukkyan War Cemetery, Myanmar. Regimental WM and RH, St Anne's Cathedral, Belfast

+GALWAY, John

Royal Artillery.Gunner.1457034. Died 08/02/1944. Aged 24. 21 Bty., 8 (Belfast) H.A.A. Regt. Son of George and Lena Galway, of Belfast. Taukkyan War Cemetery, Myanmar. Regimental WM and RH, St Anne's Cathedral, Belfast

+KINNON, Albert

Royal Artillery. 8th HAA Regt. 21 Bty. Gunner. 1459544. Died 08/02/1944. Aged 38. Husband to Agnes Kinnon, of York Park, Belfast. Brother of Tommy Kinnon, 23 Bty. Taukkyan War Cemetery, Myanmar. Named in Order of Memorial Service in St Mark's Akyab, Burma on 31/03/1945, held in memory of those in the Regiment who died in the Arakan Campaign 1942 - 45. Regimental RH, St Anne's Cathedral, Belfast

+MARTIN, Thomas

North Staffordshire Regiment. 2nd Btn. Private.7022947. Died 08/02/1944. Age 21. Son of Henry Andrews Martin and Sarah Jane Martin from Belfast. Anzio War Cemetery, Italy

+SHIELDS, James

Royal Artillery. Gunner.1487581. Died 08/02/1944. Aged 43. 8th HAA. Regt. Originally a member of 25 Bty 9th (Londonderry) HAA Regiment. As the Regiment was preparing to deploy to Egypt in November 1939, Gnr Shields fell from a lorry and broke a leg. As a result he could not travel with his own unit and was transferred to 8th (Belfast) HAA Regiment when he recovered. His cousin Miles Stott, also 25 Bty, recalled that he had been told that James had suffered a severed hand in Burma, commented that the wound would see him repatriated but shortly afterwards died of shock, possibly due to blood loss. Son of Henry Shields, and of Jane Shields (nee Hawthorne); husband to Emma Shields, of Londonderry. Yaukkyan War Cemetery, Myanmar

VETERANS

McCREA, William Ernest

RAFVR. RAF 57 Sqd. Sqd/Ldr DSC Arts 1940 QUB. Bill McCrea was a distinguished RAF officer, amateur golfer and club administrator. The Irish Times on Saturday 25 April, 2015 carried the following obituary -

During the Second World War, Bill McCrea, who has died aged 94, devised an innovative way of informing his family that against the odds he had flown his Lancaster bomber back from yet another raid over Europe.

As a pilot with RAF Bomber Command McCrea was one of a minority of officers to survive a full tour of duty. Of 125,000 Bomber Command aircrew 55,000 were killed, a further 8,500 wounded and 10,000 became prisoners of war.

William McCrea was one of the lucky ones. After every successful mission he would circumvent the censors by telegraphing his mother happy birthday wishes, thus letting her know he had survived another mission.

McCrea left his mark both as an RAF pilot and as a top-class amateur golfer, sometimes managing to combine the two activities. He was involved in some of the biggest raids of the war including the attacks on Hamburg, in which 45,000 people were killed. He viewed this as a "terrible tragedy" for the people of the city, but added that "they were at war, he was a pilot officer, and his job was to get his plane and crew home".

Perhaps understandably he didn't speak much of his war time experiences until his grandson, Stuart, badgered him into opening up. He eventually wrote a book, *A Chequer-Board of Nights*, which he dedicated to his Bomber Command colleagues who died in the war. It was also the subject of a short film.

McCrea was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for valour. His citation reads "On the night of May 4th 1943 when returning from an attack on the Ruhr his aircraft was intercepted by a fighter. A prolonged combat ensued, but coolly and skilfully pilot officer McCrea finally succeeded in outmanoeuvring his adversary. The bomber sustained much damage but the pilot flew it safely to base."

Bill McCrea was born in Ramelton, Co Donegal in 1921. After his wartime experience he resumed his studies at Queen's, graduating in 1946 with a BSc in Geology and in 1948 with a BSc in Geography. He then re-joined the RAF as an education officer.

McCrea was an amateur international golfer between 1965 and 1967, debuting for Ireland at the age of 44. Among many successes he won the Austrian Amateur Open in 1965 and the Dutch Open in 1966.

He retired as an RAF wing commander in 1972 to become secretary at Walton Heath golf club in Surrey, helping transform it from a struggling to a top club. While there he played a major part in staging three European Open championships as well as the Ryder Cup in 1981.

Bill McCrea was predeceased in August 2012 by his wife of 68 years, Gwyneth, and is survived by his son, John, daughter, Sheelagh, grandchildren, Stuart and Sarah, brothers, Hugh and Basil, and sister, Emmeline.

Basil McCrea, a member of the Northern Ireland Assembly, is his nephew.

McKNIGHT, Alexander

Rifleman. 6214 12th Battalion Royal Irish Rifles. Alexander was born at Mallusk, Co. Antrim on 23/03/1898 and later moved to Templepatrick. He enlisted in the 12th Rifles aged 17 in May 1915 and embarked for France in October that year. He was wounded in action three times and discharged with the Silver War Badge on 08/02/1919. He died a week later in the Flu Pandemic. St Patrick's C of I Templepatrick

Every day is a Remembrance Day

We will remember them

**To return to Home Page - click on Remembrance NI
masthead.**

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

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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