



remembrance ni



## Derry and Portrush's Dambuster

Flight Sergeant Richard "Dickie" Bolitho was born in Londonderry in 1920. He was the only child of William, a commercial traveller in seeds, and Jeanie nee Cuthbertson.



## **Painting of Richard 'Dickie' Bolitho by Dan Llewelyn Hall marking the 75th anniversary of Operation Chastise**

Richard was brought up at Jeanie's family home, "Braehead" in Londonderry. In 1927 the family moved to England, buying a hotel on Castle Boulevard in Kimberley, Nottinghamshire and Richard moved in with his aunt Emily who owned a fruit and vegetable shop. He attended the Church Hill School

### **RAF service**

He joined the RAF at the end of 1940 and qualified as an air gunner. After completing his training he was posted to No. 9 Squadron, which flew Avro Lancaster four-engined heavy bombers from RAF Waddington in Lincolnshire, and then to No. 57 Squadron at Scampton.

In March 1943 Richard Bolitho was posted to the newly-formed No. 617 Squadron, also at Scampton. This unit had been created under Wing Commander Guy Gibson for the attack on the Ruhr dams which was planned for May.

**Two New Zealanders flew in the Dambusters raid, they were Flying Officer Leonard Chambers DFC (later Flight Lieutenant) and Flight Lieutenant John Leslie Munro DSO, DFC (later Squadron Leader)**



His last leave was spent with P/O Wile, W/O Garshowitz and Sergeant Kinnear at home in Kimberley, Nottinghamshire.



## The last flight

Their aircraft piloted by by Flight Lieutenant William Astell DFC left Scampton at 2159 hours. Its target was the Mohne Dam.



In the early hours of Monday, May 17, 1943 as it crossed from the Netherlands into Germany the Lancaster was hit by enemy anti-aircraft fire. Astell continued to fly on.

Along with two planes flown by Pilot Officer Knight and Squadron Leader Maudslay and crews, they proceeded into Germany. The other two crews altered course but F/L Astell became slightly off course and on reaching a canal crossing, which was actually the correct place, turned South down the canal as though to search for the correct position.

However, the aircraft then caught fire before crashing into a high-tension mast carrying 1000,000-volt wires near the

village of Marbeck in Germany. It burst into flames, crashed into fields behind some farmhouses; it's bomb on fire, and rolled onwards before exploding. At the same time its machine guns continued to fire into the burning aircraft.

All of Astell's crew, including Richard Bolitho, were killed in the crash. The Lancaster was the first of No. 617's aircraft to be lost that night.

Eyewitnesses who ran to the crash scene were unable to get close owing to the ammunition still discharging. A very deep bomb crater about 12 meters wide was left.

Many buildings nearby had roofs torn off and windows smashed but miraculously a statue of St. Joseph holding the baby Jesus, on the edge of the crater remained untouched.

A memorial stone and plaque lie at the site as a permanent memorial to Flight Lieutenant Astell and his crew.

In 2018 on the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the raid portraits by Dan Llywelyn Hall of all 133 members of 617 Squadron have been unveiled in two ceremonies, one at the International Bomber Command Centre in Lincoln and the other at the Dambusters Inn in Scampton.

### **+BOLITHO, Richard**

RAFVR. Flight Sergeant. 1211045. Died 17/05/1943. Age 23. 617 Sqdn. Richard Bolitho was serving as Rear Gunner on board Lancaster Mk.III ED-864 coded AJ-B during Operation Chastise on May 16/17/1943. The plane flown by Flight Lieutenant William Astell DFC was part of the main force of No. 617 Squadron which was to bomb the Mohne dam. Son of William Bolitho and Jane Bolitho, Portrush.

Reichswald Forest War Cemetery. Kimberley WM, Nottinghamshire, and in 2008 a special plaque was commissioned.

Family Memorial in Portrush cemetery.

## **Service history**

Joined RAF in 1940, No2 RC 25/11/1940. No 4 RC. (. 12/1940, RAF Calshot.10/01/1941. No 1 RW.26/04/1941, No7 ITW.10/05/1941. 51 Group Pool.28/06/1941, ADRC. 05/08/1941. RDU.06/10/1941, No 14 ITW.10/01/1942. No9.AGS.05/06/1942, No19.OTU.27/08/1942.No1654.CU. 15/10/1942, 9 Squadron.23/12/1942. 57 Squadron. 22/01/1943, 617 Squadron.25/03/1943.

## **Overview of Operation Chastise**

Operation Chastise was an attack on German dams carried out on 16–17 May 1943 by Royal Air Force No. 617 Squadron, later called the Dam Busters, using a purpose-built "bouncing bomb" developed by Barnes Wallis. The Möhne and Edersee Dams were breached, causing catastrophic flooding of the Ruhr valley and of villages in the Eder valley; the Sorpe Dam sustained only minor damage. The operation was given to No. 5 Group RAF, which formed a new squadron to undertake the dams mission. It was initially called Squadron X. The squadron was based at RAF Scampton, about 5 mi (8 km) north of Lincoln.

The targets selected were the Möhne Dam and the Sorpe Dam, upstream from the Ruhr industrial area, with the Eder Dam on the Eder River, which feeds into the Weser, as a secondary target. The loss of hydroelectric power was important but the loss of water to industry, cities, and canals would have a greater effect and there was potential for devastating flooding if the dams broke.



The aircraft were modified Avro Lancaster Mk IIIs, known as B Mark III Special (Type 464 Provisioning). The squadron was divided into three formations.

Formation No. 1 was composed of nine aircraft in three groups. Formation No. 2, numbering five aircraft. Formation No. 3 was a mobile reserve consisting of 5 aircraft.

The Operations Room for the mission was at 5 Group Headquarters in St Vincents Hall, Grantham, Lincolnshire. The mission codes (transmitted in morse) were: Goner, meaning "bomb dropped"; Nigger, meaning that the Möhne was breached; and Dinghy, meaning that the Eder was breached.

The Dams Raid was, like many British air raids, undertaken with a view to the need to keep drawing German defensive

effort back into Germany and away from actual and potential theatres of ground war. Air Marshall Harris regarded the raid as a failure and a waste of resources. .

Some 19 Lancaster bombers flew from RAF Scampton in Lincolnshire for the daring mission on May 16/17, 1943, to shatter dams in Germany's industrial heartland and cut off vital supply lines in the Ruhr Valley.

A total of 133 Allied aircrew left for the raid aboard the bombers, led by Wing Commander Guy Gibson, but 53 men were killed and another three were captured.

# On this Day – May 17

## In the newspapers - May 17

### 17th May 1918 Northern Whig

**Rifleman Robert James Gray**, 1125, 22nd Entrenching Battalion, formerly 11th/13th Battalion Royal Irish Rifles, killed in action 30th March, 1918. Son of Mr. John and the late Margaret Gray nee Thompson, Stepson of Francis Elizabeth Gray, of 16a Church Street, Bangor, Co Down. (Deceased was 22 years of age and is commemorated on the Pozières Memorial, France).

**Private Arthur Robinson**, 28250, 9th Battalion Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, killed in action 29th March, 1918. Son



of Arthur and Margaret Robinson, of 11 Langley Street, Belfast ; Husband of the late Louisa Robinson, of Midland Street, Shankill Road, Belfast. (Deceased was 39 years of age and is commemorated on the Pozières Memorial, France).

## **1915**

Press photos on this day showed mass grave of victims of the sinking of the RMS Lusitania, Cobh, Ireland.

The sinking of the Cunard ocean liner RMS Lusitania occurred on Friday, 7 May 1915 during the First World War, as Germany waged submarine warfare against the United Kingdom who had implemented a naval blockade of Germany. The ship was identified and torpedoed by the German U-boat U-20 and sank in 18 minutes.

A little fishing boat, The Wanderer, from Peel Isle of Man was the first boat on the scene and witnessed the explosion. The fishermen took on over 200 survivors many of them unclothed and set sail for land. By the time they neared the coast they were met by boats going out to the scene. Low in the water they transferred their precious cargo to one of these boats who brought them inland and who were then hailed heroes. The Peel fishermen knowing there were little survivors still left and that the other boats would return to the scene quicker than they would...they made their way to their fishing grounds to retrieve their pots and catch before the sabbath. It took 2 months for their efforts to be formally recognised in a quiet ceremony at home and for over 50 years this was hailed as a military rescue.

## **1916**

The Germans capture the British mine crater on Vimy Ridge.

## **1917**

The King of the Belgians visits the Somme, Ancre and Arras battlefields.

## **1940**

Biggest RAF attack on Germany to date as the oil tanks at Bremen and Hamburg are blown up. British claim 1,000 German aircraft lost in a single week.

Brussels, Louvain and Malines in central Belgium all occupied by troops of the 6th Army. Germans attack further into N-E France; General Gamelin, French Commander-in-Chief, gives allied troops 'conquer or die' order. French prime minister Pierre Laval is replaced by Paul Reynaud who forms a new government. Charles de Gaulle's newly raised 4th Armoured division launches a counter-attack near Laon, which is easily repulsed by the Germans.

Twelve Blenheims attack enemy tanks and troops near Gembloux. Ten are shot down by fighters and one by ground fire.

## **1941**

The German battleship Bismarck and the heavy cruiser Prinz Eugen leave Gotenhafen in the Baltic to begin operations against British convoys in the Atlantic (Operation Rhein-Übung).

The Italian Army joint is forces in Amba Alagi, but at May 17 they collapse and surrender. The British Army captures 230.000 prisoners.



First US pilot volunteer with RAF Eagle squadron killed in action, Mike Kolendorski.

## 1942

Air Marshal Harris is given permission by Churchill for a raid on Germany by 1000 bombers. This was in spite of the fact that the RAF's operational strength at this time was only 500 aircraft. However, it was believed that by enlisting RAF Coastal Command and the RAF's training squadron's, then the magical 1000 bombers could be found. Harris believed that the only way to get a commitment for strong bomber force, was to demonstrate what could be done with one. He planned to launch operation 'Millenium', before the end of the month.

The Russians continue to evacuate their forces across the Kerch Straits, leaving behind vast amounts of artillery and

heavy equipment, which the Germans then turn upon the besieged fort of Sevastopol.

## **1943**

Dambusters - Take the right combination of secrecy, daring and inventiveness and the likely result is an enduring legend. And none is more enduring than the Dambusters raid on 16/17 May 1943. Bomber crews used Sir Barnes Wallis's revolutionary bouncing bombs, releasing them 60ft above ground, to try to breach three huge dams in the Ruhr Valley. The plan was not a total success but those who executed it became heroes.

The Memphis Belle completes 25th and final mission against Nazi Germany and the occupied territories.

The Luftwaffe carries out a night raid involving 89 aircraft against Cardiff in Wales.

The Germans launch a fifth offensive to destroy Tito's partisans in Yugoslavia.

## **1944**

Kesselring orders the evacuation of Cassino. The French breakthrough is now 25 miles deep.

Merrill's 'Marauders' take Myitkyina airfield after a three-week, 100-mile, Jungle march.

U.S. troops land on Wake Island and the northern coast of New Guinea, 125 miles to the West of Hollandia.

## **1945**



## **38 (Irish) Division - Cassino**

H Coy led the advance of 2 LIR through the German Gustav Line defensive lines at Sinagoga & onto Colle Monache. In a moving testimony, Major Desmond Woods described the actions of Cpl James Barnes who he recommended for a posthumous Victoria Cross. QS

CQMS O'Sullivan 2 LIR in Austria:

"We arrived at Wolfsberg. The men spent their time cleaning uniforms & polishing boots. The next day E Coy paraded & they were allowed out but told not to fraternise with the population. They of course had never heard the term before."

# **Roll of Honour – May 17**

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

**1915**

**+COLLINS, David McC**

Black Watch, 6th Btn. (Perthshire Territorial Battalion). Private. 265756. Died 17/05/1915. Age 20. Born in Belfast, he enlisted at Perth. Son of Mr. R. and Mrs. J.A. Collins of "Maryburn", Andersontown, Belfast. Bailleul Road East Cemetery, St. Laurent-Blangy, Pas de Calais, France

## **+CORKIN, Henry**

Royal Irish Rifles, 11th Btn. Lance Sergeant. 17480. Died 17/05/1915. Age 23. Drowned while bathing, probably in the River Ancre a tributary of the Somme. Born in Lisburn, he was “a musician of rare promise” who played the soprano cornet in the Lisburn Temperance Silver Band in which Francis Neagle (below) also played. A carpenter by trade he also belonged to the UVF. He had completed his apprenticeship with James Shortt just before he joined up, enlisting at Lisburn and serving in 11 RIR along with his two brothers Rifleman John and Lance Corporal William (Willie) Corkin, the latter being in the same platoon. They all embarked for France from Bordon Camp with their battalion in October 1915.

According to Captain E.F. Smyth who wrote to his parents, he had been in command of a guard detail on a bridge and had gone in for a swim after dinner along with Riflemen J. Hillis and W. Wright, neither of whom could swim. “He told them he was going out to see how deep the pool was and then swam out about 15 yards. It would seem as if he got caught up in the weeds, and Wright tried to get him out but failed while Hillis ran for help. He had some distance to come; we ran down and Rifleman A. Larmour and Corporal Dunlop went in and swam around. Larmour found him in about ten feet of water and they brought him in. Everything possible was done by the medical officer, but he had been under too long”. Son of Elizabeth and Henry Corkin of 83 Gregg Street, Lisburn. His brother Rifleman John Corkin also died in the war.

Of those involved at the time of Henry Corkin’s death only one, Wright, seems to have survived the war. All the others,

Edmund Smyth, John Hillis, Alex Larmour and Quinton Dunlop died. Of his two brothers, John was to die the following February shortly after being discharged, William was wounded on 01/07/1916 and was fortunate to survive. On the opening day of the Somme he had been shot through the chest. Taken back to an overcrowded CCS, like countless others he was left outside on a stretcher awaiting treatment. He was found there by Charlie M'Cahey another Lisburn man who was a Driver with the 36 Division RASC. M'Cahey had volunteered to go down and help at the CCS after going off duty. Seeing that Corkin was bleeding heavily, he carried him to the operating table where he was treated and shipped back to the military hospital in Hampstead. On hearing the news, Henry Corkin senior, William's father, who was employed at the Island Spinning Mill, wrote to the Lisburn Standard so that, "the people of Lisburn know that Mr. M'Cahey's action saved my boy Willie's life". Henry Corkin was buried with many of his friends in attendance in Authuille Military Cemetery, France. In Memoriam notice in the Herald on the 17/05/1919.

**+FERGUSON, William James**

RN. Stoker 1st Class. 308717, RFR/B/3665. Nelson Battalion RND. Died 17/05/1915. Age 29. Born Keady 06/05/1886. Son of Leah Ferguson and late James Ferguson, Bryson St., Belfast. Died of wounds received in Gallipoli in hospital in Alexandria. Alexandria (Chatby) Military and War Memorial Cemetery, Egypt. ADM339

## **+FINLAY, D**

Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, 2nd Btn. Private. 7755. Died 17/05/1915. Age 28. Brother of Mrs. Elizabeth A. Irwin, of 63, Seaview St., Belfast. Bethune Town Cemetery, France

## **+GIBSON, James**

Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers. 2nd Btn. Private. 28157. Died 16/05/1915. Age 20. Brother of Henry Gibson, of 13, Alaska St., Belfast. Arras Memorial, France

## **+KERR, John**

Highland Light Infantry. 2nd Btn. Private. 12144. Died 17/05/1915. Age 18. Son of Mrs. Francis Kerr, of 23, Kenmare St., Belfast. Le Touret Memorial, France

## **+LYTTLE, William George**

1st Battalion Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers. Private. 9584. Died 17/05/1915. Age 25. Enlisted when he was 16 years of age and served with the 1st Battalion Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers for 8 years in China and Trimulgherry, India, where he served with Robert Falls and William Nixon, two of his childhood friends. In December 1914 the Battalion returned to England, and landed on the Gallipoli peninsula on 25/04/1915, where they suffered very heavy casualties. During this action on 17th May, William Little was wounded and died from his wounds a few hours later. Born in Moneymore and lived at Coolkeeghan, Blue Doors, in Cookstown. Twelve Trees Copse Cemetery, Cape Helles, Gallipoli. Cookstown WM, St Luran's Church, Cookstown RH



### **+MAGEE, William John**

Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers. 1st Btn. G Coy. Company Sergeant Major. 6666. Died 17/05/1915. Age 35. Son of Francis James and Louisa F. Magee, of 80, Kimberley St., Ballynafeigh, Belfast. Twelve Tree Copse Cemetery, Turkey (including Gallipoli)

### **+McCRACKEN, S**

Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, 1st Btn. Private. 9481. Died 17/05/1915. Twelve Tree Copse Cemetery, Turkey (including Gallipoli)

### **+NEAGLE, Francis**

Royal Irish Rifles, 2nd Btn. Rifleman. 11327. Died 17/05/1915. Age 21. He enlisted at Lisburn early in the war and served with 2 RIR in Gallipoli. Slightly wounded, he returned home to Lisburn on sick leave where, "his parents made an attempt to claim him off as he was not nineteen years of age, but young Neagle point-blank refused to leave the army", and on his recovery was posted to the Western Front. On the 11 December 1914 he wrote to the Rev. R.W. Hamilton thanking the members of Railway Street Presbyterian Church for a parcel they had sent him. In his letter he remarked that, "I am proud and willing with the Lord's help to do my part in helping to bring this war to a satisfactory end".

Born in Blaris, Co. Antrim, he lived in Lisburn where he had been a member of the Boys Brigade, worked at the Island Mill with his brother William James (see below) and played second trombone in Lisburn Temperance Silver Band, in which Henry Corkin (above) also played. He was the son of

James and Mary Neagle of 39 Mercer Street and 13 Canal Street, Lisburn and brother of Lance Corporal William James Neagle, who, before the war, had been employed as a flax dresser at the Island Spinning Company. Arras Memorial, Faubourg D'Amiens Cemetery, France

### **+PORTER, W**

Royal Irish Rifles, 2nd Btn. Corporal. 8552. Died 17/05/1915. Corporal. Husband to Mary Porter, of Whitewell, Belfast. Ridge Wood Military Cemetery, Belgium

### **+WAUGH, Thomas**

Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, 2nd Btn. Serjeant. 7873. Died 16/05/1915. Age 31. Son of John and Ann Jane Waugh, of 55, Epworth St., Belfast; husband of Maggie Waugh, of Ballykeel, Ardaragh, Newry. Le Touret Memorial, France

### **+WYLIE, William Smyth**

Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, 2nd Btn. Private. 9319. Died 16/05/1915. Age 25. Son of William James and Sarah Wylie, of 43, Lecale St., Belfast. Le Touret Memorial, France

## **1916**

### **+ALLEN, William**

Royal Irish Rifles. 12th Btn. Rifleman. 6530. Died 17/05/1916. Age 19. A report on the death of Rifleman William Allen was published in the Ballymena Observer 2nd June 1916. "Lieutenant T.G. Haughton writing to Mr and Mrs Allen, Dunnyvadden, Kells on the death of their son, William says :- "Wednesday 17th May 1916. Dear Mr Allen – It is my sad duty to write and tell you of the death of your son

William of the 12th Battalion Royal Irish Rifles. On Monday last he was on sentry in the front line trenches when a heavy shell exploded just beside him. He was severely wounded in the leg. Being so cheerful about it I felt certain he would recover in hospital but I have just received the sad news of his death.

“For a year I have been his platoon officer and have always found him to be a splendid and most promising soldier. At his various duties, he was ever hard working and willing and recently made great fame for himself in the handling of grenades. I am quite unable to express my deep regrets at losing him and he will always live in my memory as a brave and good soldier. I hope it will be some little comfort to you to know the high esteem in which I held him with the rest of the men in the platoon and he has died the finest death a man can”. Lieutenant T.G. Haughton from Craigs, Cullybackey, died on 01/07/1916 on the opening day of the Battle of the Somme. Son of Samuel and Ellen Allen, of Dunyvadden Kells, Ballymena. Forceville Communal Cemetery and Extension, France. Ballymena WM. First Ballymena Presbyterian Church RH

### **+CLARKE, Francis**

Royal Irish Rifles, 2nd Btn. Rifleman. 5855. Died 17/05/1916. Born 1899. Son of John and Mary Clarke ,20 Albert St., Lurgan. Arras Memorial, France. Lurgan WM. Hill St Presbyterian Church RH

### **+CRUMLIN, William Robert**

Royal Irish Rifles, 2nd Btn. Rifleman. 11143. Died 17/05/1916. William was a career soldier enlisted in Belfast

14/07/1899 in the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, transferred to the Royal Irish Rifles 01/08/1899 (6314) served in the South African campaign (1901- 1902). Born 08/08/1878 in Lurgan. Son of Robert & Margaret Anne Crumlin, Belfast. Husband to Ellen Frances Crumlin, 52 River Terrace, Ormeau Rd., Belfast. Married 05/04/1908. Father of 1 child. Married 5/4/1908. Ecoivres Military Cemetery, Mont-St-Eloi, France. Lurgan WM

### **+POOTS, Robert.**

Royal Irish Rifles, 2nd Btn. Corporal. 5381. Died 17/05/1916. Aged 19. Brother of Rifleman William John Poots 798, 15th Royal Irish Rifles, who died 21/03/1918. Son of William John and Eliza Ann Poots, Scarva Road, Banbridge. Ecoivres Military Cemetery, Mont-St. Eloi, Pas de Calais, France. Seapatrick C of I Parish WM, Banbridge WM

### **+PRICE, Samuel**

Royal Irish Rifles, 2nd Btn. Rifleman. 5/5361. Died 17/05/1916. Aged 35. Samuel was a career soldier, enlisted in the 83rd Foot Royal Irish Rifles 24/09/1898 (2849), served in the South African Campaign, discharged 23/09/1904. Re-enlisted at the start of the Great War in the 5th Royal Irish Rifles, transferred to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Btn. Born in 1881 in Gallows Street, Dromore, Co Down. Husband to Margaret Price Glasgow, father of 3 children. Arras Memorial, France. Dromore WM.

### **+SMYTH, P**

Royal Irish Rifles, 2nd Btn. Rifleman. 11016. Died 17/05/1916. Aged 37. Son of John and Ellen Smyth, of John St., Downpatrick. Ecoivres Military Cemetery, Mont-St. Eloi, Pas de Calais, France



### **+WILSON, J**

Royal Irish Rifles, 2nd Btn. Rifleman. 5121. Died 17/05/1916. Aged 24. Son of the late James and Annie Wilson, of Ann St., Lurgan. Ecoivres Military Cemetery, Mont-St. Eloi, Pas de Calais, France

**1917**

### **+GIBSON, James**

Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, 1st Btn. Private. 28157. Died 17/05/1917. Age 20 years old. James enlisted in Hamilton while he was living and working in Scotland. Born in the parish of Derryloran, Cookstown. Brother of Henry Gibson, of 13, Alaska St., Belfast. Arras Memorial, France. Cookstown War Dead Book.

### **+JOHNSTON, James**

Machine Gun Corps, 108th Coy. Private. 19518. Died 17/05/1917. Aged 24. Son of Mrs. E. Johnston of 26 Charlotte Street, Donegal Pass, Belfast. Dranoutre Military Cemetery, West-Vlaanderen, Belgium.

### **+McIVOR, Samuel**

Machine Gun Corps, 108th Coy. Serjeant. 17693. Died 17/05/1917. Aged 26. Brother of Mrs. Susan Stevenson, of Clady, Dunadry, Co. Antrim. Dranoutre Military Cemetery, West-Vlaanderen, Belgium. LOL 1422 WM, Muckamore Orange Hall

**+THORPE, Alfred Victor**

Royal Irish Rifles, 6th Btn. Rifleman. 11428. Died 16/05/1917. Age 38. Son of the late James and Mary Thorpe, of Belfast. Struma Military Cemetery, Greece

**+WILLIAMSON, William George**

Royal Irish Fusiliers. Corporal. 14764. Died 17/05/1917 in Purdysburn Fever Hospital, Belfast. Age 21. Served in France where he took ill and was repatriated. Eldest son of John and Hanna Williamson, of Drummond, Richhill. Mullabrack (St John) C of I Churchyard

**1918**

**+CHAPMAN, Edward**

Royal Irish Rifles, 12th Btn. C Company. Rifleman. 6459. Died 17/05/1915. Age 19. Born in Aghalee or Megaberry, Moira, he enlisted at Lisburn. Son of Joseph and Susan Chapman 722 Mulvey Avenue, Fort Rouge, Winnipeg, Canada. Roye New British Cemetery, Somme, France

**+MONTGOMERY, Maurice (Morris)**

Seaforth Highlanders. 8th Btn. Private. 241210. Died 17/05/1918. Born in 36 Roseleigh St., Belfast on 05/08/1897. Maurice worked as a pork cutter. He initially enlisted in Belfast in the Royal Irish Rifles (2431) on 07/10/1914. He was discharged on 09/01/1915 for having made a misstatement on enlistment. It seems there was a misunderstanding about his discharge and he was arrested as a deserter. Regardless of this, he re-enlisted with the Seaforth Highlanders. In 1901 his family was living in Chief

St., Belfast. In 1911 he was living at his grandfather James Hackney's house at Cogry. Son of Thomas McClure Montgomery and Margaret (nee Hackney) Montgomery who later lived at 54 Cosgrave St., Belfast. Wanquetin Communal Cemetery Extension, France. Ballyclare WM. St John's C of I Church, Ballyclare RH

## 1919

### **+BOAL, James**

RN. Petty Officer Stoker. 287397. HMS Valerian. Died 17/05/1919. Aged 41. Born Belfast. Husband to E. Boal, Warwick Row, Carrickfergus. Gillingham (Woodlands) Cemetery, Kent. Memorial plaque St Nicholas' Parish Church, Carrickfergus.

## 1920

### **+JOHNSTON, Walter Wilson**

Royal Dublin Fusiliers. 2<sup>nd</sup> Btn. Second Lieutenant. Died 17/05/1920 from an illness contracted whilst on active service. Age 22. Only child of William Walter and Martha Johnston. Born on 10/10/1897 in County Monaghan. His father was the Station Manager for the Great Northern Railway in Monaghan Town. Walter attended the Model School in Monaghan before transferring to Royal School Dungannon in 1913. Walter then went on to pursue a military career by entering Sandhurst in England on 27 April 1916. In October 1916, he obtained a commission with the 3rd Battalion of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers. Monaghan Presbyterian Church cemetery. Dungannon Royal School Book

## 1940

### **+GILDEA, Thomas James**

Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, 2nd Btn. Sergeant. 6976636. Died 17/05/1940. Aged 28. It is believed that Sgt. Gildea was killed close to the Senne Canal at Halle. It is believed he died during an action close to the Senne Canal where Royal Engineers were attempting to demolish bridges after British Expeditionary Forces had crossed on their way to Dunkirk. Thomas had served for 7 years in the Army prior to the Second World War. Son of Robert and Hester Gildea, Cookstown; husband to Sally Gildea, 12 Sandhurst, Cookstown. Thomas James Gildea worked as a printer and also worked in Luton, England. Halle Communal Cemetery, Halle, Vaalms - Brabant. Cookstown WM

### **+McCLENAGHAN, Thomas**

RAF. Aircraftman 1st Class. 621224. Died 17/05/1940. Aged 20. John and Mary McClenaghan, Enniskillen. Caversfield (St. Laurence) Churchyard

### **+O'REILLY, John Patrick**

RAF. Leading Aircraftman. 535507. Died 17/05/1940. Aged 20. 16 Sqdn. Son of James and Sarah O'Reilly, Cliftonville, Belfast. Oingt Communal Cemetery Extension, Somme, France

## 1941

### **+CRONE, Thomas William Archibald Crone**

RAFVR. Sergeant (Wireless Op./Air Gunner). 969953. Died 17/05/1941. Aged 28. 77 Sqdn. Son of William Archibald



and Isabella Wilhelmina Crone, of Bloomfield, Belfast, Rotem Communal Cemetery, Limburg, Belgium . 502 (Ulster) Squadron WM, St Anne's Cathedral, Belfast

**1942**

**+BOYLE, William Columba**

RAF. Flight Sergeant. 651585. Died 17/05/1942. Age 26. RAF 86 Sqdn. He died while serving as a Wireless Operator / Air Gunner with RAF 86 Squadron based at RAF Sumburgh, Shetland. His crew took off in the Mark II Bristol Beaufort AW251 along with others from the Squadron to attack the German Cruiser Prinz Eugen. Crews from RAF 42 Squadron accompanied them on the mission under the command of Wing Commander Mervyn Williams. A total of 19 Bristol Blenheim bombers and 27 Bristol Beaufort torpedo bombers took part in the strike. Prinz Eugen was off the coast of Egersund, Norway, returning to Germany after undergoing repairs. The Royal Air Force lost 4 Bristol Beaufighters in the attack. German ships and accompanying Messerschmitt Bf 109 fighter planes shot down the Allied bombers. The German Cruiser made it safely back to Germany unscathed. Son of James and Mary Rebecca Boyle; Husband to Christina Boyle, Belfast. Sola Churchyard, British Plot, Norway

**+CROZIER, Cyril Johnson**

RAFVR. Sergeant (Observer). 1061583. Died 17/05/1942. 86 Sqdn. He was an observer on the Mark II Bristol Beaufort AW251 that took off from R.A.F. Sumburgh, Shetland, Scotland. The sortie was an attack on the Kriegsmarine cruiser Prinz Eugen. Crews from R.A.F. 42 Squadron accompanied them on the mission under the command of

Wing Commander Mervyn Williams. A total of 19 Bristol Blenheim bombers and 27 Bristol Beaufort torpedo bombers took part in the strike. Prinz Eugen was off the coast of Egersund, Norway, returning to Germany after undergoing repairs. The Royal Air Force lost four Bristol Beaufighters in the attack, downed by German shipping and Messerschmitt Bf109 fighters. The German cruiser made it back to Germany unscathed.

Born 11/02/1913 in Londonderry. Son of William John and Ada (née Johnson) Crozier of 1a Strand, Londonderry. The family later moved to Coleraine. Cyril was a student at Coleraine Academical Institution 1923 - 1926. He then studied languages at Queen's University, Belfast. BA Degree in 1935, and a MA Degree in 1937. He also obtained a Higher Diploma in Education. After graduating, he taught French and English at Lisburn Technical High School For Boys until the outbreak of WW2. Cyril had moved from Coleraine to 13 Fourth Avenue, Bangor, Co. Down. On 12/11/1941, he and Meta Wilson of 18 Farnham Road in the town, married at Queen's Parade Methodist Church. They had a honeymoon in Éire. The couple was well-known in local music circles. Sola Churchyard, Norway. Bangor WM. Coleraine Academical Institution WM. Queen's University WM

### **+ESLER, John Acheson**

RAFVR. Flying Officer (Pilot). 64903. DFC. Died 17/05/1942. Age 27. Died while serving as a Pilot with RAF 86 Squadron based at RAF Sumburgh, Shetland. His crew took off in the Mark II Bristol Beaufort AW367 BX-W along with others from the Squadron to attack the German Cruiser

Prinz Eugen. Crews from RAF 42 Squadron accompanied them on the mission under the command of Wing Commander Mervyn Williams. A total of 19 Bristol Blenheim bombers and 27 Bristol Beaufort torpedo bombers took part in the strike. Prinz Eugen was off the coast of Egersund, Norway, returning to Germany after undergoing repairs. The Royal Air Force lost 4 Bristol Beaufighters in the attack. German ships and accompanying Messerschmitt Bf 109 fighter planes shot down the Allied bombers. The German Cruiser made it safely back to Germany unscathed. Esler was a recipient of the Distinguished Flying Cross. 86 Sqdn. Son of Logan and Margaret Esler, of Ballymena. John had a twin sister, Ann McCurdy Esler. First Ballymena Presbyterian Church RH. Bergen (Mollendal) Church Cemetery, Norway

**1943**

**+BOLITHO, Richard**

RAFVR. Flight Sergeant. 1211045. Died 16 - 17/05/1943. Age 23. 617 Sqdn. Richard Bolitho was serving as Rear Gunner on board Lancaster Mk.III ED-864 coded AJ-B during Operation Chastise on May 16/17/1943. The plane flown by Flight Lieutenant William Astell DFC was part of the main force of No. 617 Squadron which was to bomb the Mohne dam. Son of William Bolitho and Jane Bolitho, Portrush. Reichswald Forest War Cemetery. Kimberley WM, Nottinghamshire, and in 2008 a special plaque was commissioned. See article above, page 1

**+McCREADY, Herbert George Horatio**

RAFVR. Sergeant 1024867. Died 17/05/1943. Aged 26. Son of James and Margaret McCready, Cullybackey. Runnymede Memorial, Panel 157

**1944**

**+WILLIAMS, John**

Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers. Corporal. 6981913. Died 17/05/1944 in the assault on Piumarola. Age 30. Son of William and Alice Williams; husband of Annie Williams, of Newtownards. Cassino

**1945**

**+CAMPBELL, Hugh**

RAFVR. Warrant Officer. 977546. Died 17/05/1945. Aged 33. 355 Sqdn. Son of Hugh Campbell, and of Elizabeth Campbell, Belfast. Singapore Memorial, Column 448, Singapore

**VETERANS**

**DRAFFIN, David Alexander**

RAMC. Captain. MB, BCh, BAO 1939 QUB. DLO Eng 1948. Commissioned RAMC 26/12/1939. Served with BEF in France and Belgium. Captured 17/05/1940. In German captivity at Oflag IV-C, Colditz, Sachsen 18/08/1943 - 01/09/1944. Consultant ENT Surgeon, Hospital of St Cross, Rugby, Manor Hospital, Nuneaton & George Elliot Hospital, Nuneaton. Member, British Medical Association. Senior

Registrar ENT South East Kent Hospital Group. Clinical Assistant Instructor Laryngology & Otolaryngology. Published several medical articles in Journal of Laryngology & Otolaryngology. Son (with five brothers and four sisters) of Alexander Draffin (1862-1951), and Sarah Ann McBurney (1880-1965), Castleblayney Monaghan, Ireland. He and Margaret R. Lyle married (12.07.1948), Jesmond Parish Church, Newcastle upon Tyne district

**MAXWELL, John George Kennedy.**

RAFVR. 296 Sqdn. Flight Lieutenant. Navigator.126559. John joined the RAFVR on 24//07/1942. Made an escape and evasion report having had to bail out on 06/06/1944 when serving with 296 Squadron RAF during D Day. John had joined the RAF on 24 July 1942. He along with 2 other crew members was evacuated from the Normandy beachhead on 7 June 1944. One member of the crew, the rear gunner was unaccounted for possibly unable to bail out. John gives his peacetime profession as 'undergraduate' (QUB 1938) and private address as 207 Shore Road, Belfast. Born 17/05/1920 in Loughview Villas, Shore Rd, Belfast. Son of Robert and Maxwell.

**+McILROY, James McMurtry**

New Zealand Rifle Brigade. Rifleman. 47031. From Ballygallagh, Larne. James was wounded on the right elbow on 20/7/1918 in France and was transferred to hospital in England on 21/7/1918. He was finally declared unfit for further military service because of his war wound on 18/1/1919. James died in New Zealand on 18/5/1955. He is named on Ballynure Presbyterian Church's War Memorial





# Every day is a Remembrance Day

***We will remember them***

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

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

# 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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