



remembrance ni



**DCM award to
WW1 Ballymena
Gunner**

**Hugh McNeill,
Royal Marine WW1**

**NI Submariners
lost off
Newfoundland**

On this day

Roll of Honour

**Photo- CWGC
Jerusalem War
Cemetery, Mount
Scopos.**

DCM award to WW1 Ballymena Gunner

The London Gazette of June 21, 1916, recorded that Bombardier Joseph Francey of Ballymena had been awarded the DCM.

Bombardier Joseph Francey of Ballymena was a dedicated servant to the demanding guns and in mid-1916, his commitment to their cause was recognised with the award of the Distinguished Conduct Medal – sometimes known as the ‘other ranks’ VC’.

A pre-war regular with the Royal Field Artillery, by the time of his award he had three and a half years service under his belt.

The Ballymena Observer duly reported:- Information has been received in Ballymena to the effect that Bombardier Joseph Francey, Royal Field Artillery, son of Mr. William Francey, Queen Street, Ballymena, has been awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal. He enlisted in Scotland.

Mr. Francey has two other sons with the colours, **Pte. Alex Francey** in the Highland Light Infantry, who was 16 months in the trenches and is now on home service and **Gunner James Francey** who was through the Dardanelles Campaign and is now in France.

Supplement to the **London Gazette, 21 June 1916:**
69141 Bomr.J.Francey, 71st Bty., 36th Bde., R.F.A. “For consistent good work since the commencement of the campaign: On one occasion, though not a signaller, he mended wires under heavy fire, and restored communications at a critical moment. He has proved himself a most reliable and fearless N.C.O., and has set a fine example.” Reprinted in the **Ballymena Observer**, September 1, 1916

All ranks in the corps of artillery were left in doubt from the outset of their training about their status. The sacred gun



On this day in 1919 Admiral Ludwig Von Reuter scuttled German High Seas Fleet in Scapa Flow where they were impounded under terms of the WW 1 armistice. The 11 battleships, 5 Battlecruisers and 27 ships were sunk to avoid them being used by allies. 21 were also beached.

Photo above shows German Battle cruise Derfflinger four minutes before finally sinking.

and its welfare was to be the first and final concern of all its servants, and thousands paid a deadly toll because of this almost umbilical connection.

As the war intensified, large sections of the nation's heavy industry were devoted to feeding the insatiable demands of

the artillery. By war's end, the rate of production was astonishing, both in terms of shells and in numbers of guns.

In fact, when thousands of artillery pieces were lost in the German offensives of 1918, they were replaced within days. It was a feat which Germany could not emulate and was one of the main factors in the eventual defeat of their armies.

But efficiency and availability of war material meant little or nothing to those who used the guns at the sharp end of war. The loss of a gun was regarded as a matter of shame and some men would go to extreme lengths to protect their deadly masters.

Hugh McNeill, Royal Marine - Boxer Rebellion & WW1, victim of U-boat attack

Belfast-born Lance-Corporal Hugh McNeill, of the Royal Marines Light Infantry, perished when his ship was torpedoed by a First World War U-Boat. He served during the Boxer Rebellion in China, the defence of Antwerp and with the RNAS Armoured Car Division. His service is commemorated in Ballymena where he and his wife lived.

According to naval records, Hugh was born in Belfast on January 5th 1881.

He enlisted on July 7th 1899 and served in the crushing of the Boxer Rebellion (June 10th to December 31st 1900) in China, for which he was awarded the China War Medal. The rebels, known as Boxers because of their distinctive style of

Chinese martial arts, wanted to rid China of Western control and of the hated Christian missionaries.

Hundreds of diplomats and their families, as well as thousands of Chinese Christian converts, were held under siege and cut off from the outside world. In an unprecedented alliance, the foreign powers, among them the USA, Japan, Great Britain, France and Germany, sent a relief force to quell the rebellion.

It's thought that up to 100,000 or more people died in the conflict, although estimates on casualties have varied widely. Most of those killed were civilians, including thousands of Chinese Christians and approximately 200 to 250 foreign nationals (mostly Christian missionaries). Some estimates cite about 3,000 military personnel killed in combat, the great bulk of them being Boxers and other Chinese fighters.

After the Rebellion Hugh served on HMS Goliath, and in 1911 returned to Britain and was stationed at Fort Blockhouse in Gosport, Hampshire.

He was discharged on September 6th 1912, having completed 12 years of service. On the following day he enrolled with the Royal Fleet Reserve and settled in Belfast where he had a job as Head Boots (cleaning, polishing and caring for guests' footwear) at the Imperial Hotel, located on the corner of Donegall Place and Castle Lane.

When Hugh married Annie Harland on 12/10/1913 at St Joseph's Roman Catholic Church in Belfast, he was recorded as being a 'Navy man'. On the marriage documentation his tradesman-father's name was given as Daniel and his wife Annie, a millworker, was recorded as the

daughter of Michael Harland, also a tradesman, of 12 Bute Street in the Jennymount district of Belfast.

At some stage after their marriage Hugh and Annie moved to Ballymena and were living at 11 James Street when Hugh was recalled from the Royal Fleet Reserve. His name is included on the list of 78 men from All Saints' Roman Catholic Church serving with His Majesty's forces that was published in the Ballymena Weekly Telegraph on June 5th 1915.

As there were insufficient ships to accommodate all the naval personnel recalled from the reserves and men enlisting with the navy, Winston Churchill, the First Sea Lord, instituted a new naval force called the Royal Naval Division, which would fight as infantry in land campaigns.

Hugh McNeill served with the Portsmouth Battalion of the Royal Marine Brigade of this new force at Ostend and Antwerp between August 26th and September 1st 1914.

He was wounded in the left leg and right knee by a splinter from a German shell and, during the withdrawal from Antwerp, the train on which he was travelling was knocked off the rails and surrounded by Germans. In the engagement that followed there were many casualties on both sides and several marines were captured but a party of 90 men under Major French got safely away after a 35 mile forced march to the Belgian village of Ecloo.

Hugh McNeill then served with a Royal Naval Air Service Armoured Cars unit under Commander Charles Rumney Samson RN between September 10th and October 17th 1914 before returning to the Royal Naval Division.



Beautiful colours at this time of year in CWGC War cemetery in Gaza

Following a period of furlough, an interview with Hugh McNeill was published in the Ballymena Weekly Telegraph in May 1915 in which he spoke highly of the pluck and daring of Commander Samson, particularly in engagements with roving units of Uhlans (Light Cavalry, with a Polish military heritage) saying that the Germans had come to greatly dread and fear Commander Samson and his gallant men.

In January 1918, Hugh McNeill was promoted to Lance-Corporal and transferred to HMS President III – this was not a ship but a shore establishment for men serving on defensively armed Merchant Ships.

Hugh was a member of the gun crew on 4,320-ton SS Montebello when she was torpedoed by U-100 on June 21st

1918 and sank 320 miles from Ushant, an island off the coast of Brittany, with the loss of 41 lives.

Lance-Corporal McNeill, who is commemorated on the Portsmouth Naval Memorial, was 37 years old when he died. He was awarded the British War Medal, the Victory Medal and the 1914 Star, the latter being issued to his widow on July 1st 1920.

NI Submariners lost off Newfoundland

Three submariners from Northern Ireland were lost off the coast of Newfoundland on June 21, 1945. HMS P-514 was on passage around the coast of Newfoundland from Argentia to St Johns. P514 was an ex-US Navy boat, formerly R-19, and was used to train escort groups off the east coast of Canada.

On the 20th June 1942 P514 (Lt.Cdr. R.M.E. Pain) put to sea from the fishing village of Argentia on Canada's eastern seaboard, en route to St John's in Newfoundland and escorted by the flower class corvette 'HMS Primrose'.

On the same day the Canadian minesweeper, 'HMCS Georgian' (A/Lt.Cdr. A.G. Stanley, RCNR) sailed from St John's at 10.30 am to meet an incoming convoy. There were reports of two U-boats in the vicinity.

During the early hours of June 21st with visibility down to about 400 yards and P514 on the surface the Canadian minesweeper picked up the sound of a submarine. The Georgian, unaware that any friendly submarines were in the area, assumed that the dark shape of P-514 crossing her bow, was an enemy vessel. Not receiving a response to her

challenge with a blue night lamp, she rammed the submarine. A rescue mission was immediately sent out but no survivors were found.

A Board of Enquiry into the accident accepted that the Commanding Officer of the Georgian had acted correctly as there had been no reply from the submarine to his identification challenge.

HM Submarine P514 was originally an American submarine, built in 1918, which was transferred in March 1942 to the Royal Navy under the Lend-Lease Agreement of 1941.

Message to a next of kin

The message below was sent from R.N.Barracks, Chatham on 27th June 1942

Dear Madam,

It is with very deep regret that I have to inform you that your son, Thomas Barron, (Leading Signelman, Temporary, C/JX 145688), has been reported as missing, presumed killed, while on war service, 21st June 1942. In order that information may be denied to the enemy, it is not at present possible to make public details of the operations during which your son became a casualty and I must ask you, therefore, to refrain from disclosing to those who do not already know it, the name of your son's ship, and to regard as confidential until such time as an official announcement can be made, anything beyond the fact that your son is missing, presumed killed, on war service. There can, I fear, be no hope that your son is still alive and I should, therefore, like to express, on behalf of the officers and men of the

Royal Navy, the high traditions of which your son helped to maintain, sincere sympathy with you in your sad bereavement. I am, Madam,

Yours sincerely,

(Signature indecipherable)

Commodore.

Their epitaph

The parents of the Commanding officer erected a memorial on the north wall of the Nave in their home church of St Marys in Swinbrook West Oxfordshire. It concludes -

**The deck it was their field of fame
And ocean was their grave**

Naval pilot taken prisoner by Japanese

ALDWELL, Basil Willington

RNVR Lieutenant (A) HMS Illustrious. Japanese POW. Born in Lurgan on 23/04/1920. Son of Frederick Basil and Edith Aldwell. Educated at Trinity College, Dublin. His father was later the rector of St George's Parish Church, Belfast. Basil enlisted 20/11/1920.

War time service - 810 Sqdn. FAA. Temp Sub Lt 25/10/1941. 788 Sqdn. FAA. HMS Lanka (RN base Colombo). 01/10/1942 796 Sqdn FAA HMS Kilele (RN air station, Tanga, Tanganyika). 15/02/1943 Pilot 803 Sqdn FAA - army co-operation in East Africa. 20/09/1943 Pilot 797 Sqdn FAA HMS Ukussa (RN Air Station, Katakurun, Ceylon).

25/04/1925 Temporary Lieutenant . Flying Barracudas.

26/02/1944. Pilot 810 Sqdn FAA. HMS Illustrious.

21/06/1944 shot down on bombing raid on Port Blair, Andaman Islands with Observer S/Lt Gunther and PO Rogers, LS 471.

They were captured 15 miles off the Andaman Islands. Treatment on board a Japanese ship was good but deteriorated when they reached the islands being handcuffed and taken to Andaman Jail for interrogation. After 10 days they were flown to Singapore and although being interrogated the treatment and food was much better than at Andaman. They were then flown by Saigon, Hong Kong and Taiwan to South Honshu, Japan. They were then taken to Tokyo POW Camp. South west from the centre of Yokohama. There were 135 POWs who were naval aviators from UK and USA. Add to that submariners who had been captured. The camp leaders were two US navy officers. On 05/04/1945 the Japanese discovered that CPO Rogers was not an officer. He was moved to Omori Camp, Japan, where he was eventually liberated. Basil and Robert Gunther were questioned and punished for 10 months during which they both lost 60 lbs through lack of food. Daily for weeks they were beaten by baseball bats, made to stand on their toes or their hands. Although they were both beaten down and started to answer questions after ten months of sheer misery, they were still being questioned up to the time Japan capitulated.

During his time at Ofuna Basil undertook a religious reading at the burials of fellow prisoners. These were based on the upbringing in his youth by his father Rev F B Aldwell.

At liberation there was a change of guard at Ofuna. Masses of food and clothes were freely given. Previously the Japanese had retained over half of the Red Cross parcels and the remainder rationed over several months. Basil was diagnosed as a sitting case aboard Hospital Ship Benevolence in Tokyo Bay. He was suffering from Beri Beri and malnutrition. He was vaccinated for TB. He was taken by hospital ship to Auckland, New Zealand.

The Japanese Commander Yokura Sashizo was sentenced to 25 years hard labour at the War Crimes trials.

It was not until 1950 that Basil was fit enough to work. A radio ham, his first post was fixing the police radar in Northern Ireland. A keen sailor who won the Ailsa Craig race twice he kept a ship's chandlers in Bangor. He and Hilda Patricia Thompson married. They had three children. Basil had a farm on the coast of Strangford Lough where he bred pedigree Herefords. When the Troubles broke out in N Ireland he moved to Meath and then to Guernsey. He also had a home in Key Largo, Florida where he and his wife went each winter because of his lungs. He died on 13/05/1996 aged 76 at home in Guernsey. His remains were interred at St Pierre du Bois. Brother of Lt.(E) Thomas Derek Aldwell, RN who died in a FAA aircraft crash at St Merryn (Also known as HMS Vulture and HMS Curlew) on 13/09/1950.

On this Day – June 21



1854

First Victoria Cross won during bombardment of Bomarsund in the Aland Islands (Crimean War). It was awarded to Charles Davis Lucas a naval officer born in Poyntzpass. He rose in his career to the rank of Rear Admiral.

1919

Admiral Ludwig Von Reuter scuttled German High Seas Fleet in Scapa Flow where they were impounded under terms of the WW 1 armistice. The 11 battleships, 5

Battlecruisers and 27 ships were sunk to avoid them being used by allies. 21 were also beached. Photo above - German Fleet in Scapa Floe.

1940

Franco-German armistice negotiations begin at Compiègne, during which Hitler informs the French representatives of his terms in the same railway carriage as the German surrender

was signed in 1918.

Hitler issues a proclamation announcing the end of the war in the West and orders flags to be flown throughout Germany for ten days.

The Polish government-in-exile arrives in London.

1941

Hitler orders German subs not to attack US warships.

Prime Minister Churchill comments on the possibility of an alliance with the Soviet Union: "If Hitler invaded Hell, I would make at least a favorable reference to the Devil in the House of Commons."

British forces occupy Damascus, while another British column invades Syria from Iraq.

Vichy France excludes Jews from schools.

British General Sir Claude Auchinleck replaces General Archibald Wavell as C in C forces Middle East Command; while Wavell takes Auchinleck's place over Indian Army.

Free French occupy Damascus, Syria.

US State Department orders closure of all Italian consulates in US by July 15.

1942

HM Submarine P514 (ex USS R19) was rammed and sunk off Newfoundland by Canadian minesweeper HMCS Georgian, which was unaware of P514's presence and attacked after challenging and receiving no response. P514 sank with all hands: 41 men, three were from NI - see 21 June Roll of Honour below and article above.

The Luftwaffe carries out a night raid against Southampton. German infantry and combat engineers of 11th Army are gaining ground slowly in their assault on Sevastopol, but the

ferocious Russian defense at Sevastopol forces Adolf Hitler do something he doesn't like to do, namely delay the German Summer offensive.

General Erwin Rommel captures the port city of Tobruk in North Africa. The Germans capture 32,000 prisoners, 2,000 tons of fuel, 5,000 tons of food and 2,000 vehicles.

1943

The RAF launches a heavy raid on Krefeld in the Ruhr, but lose 44 aircraft.

Allies advance to New Georgia, Solomon Islands.

1944

38 Irish Brigade

Brigadier Pat Scott, at Lake Trasimene: "I went to see John Horsfall about 7am, at a brick factory, where he was making his final preparations. He was as confident as ever and his plan was the best for a difficult and exposed advance..."

Lt-Col Horsfall 2 LIR, near Sanfaturchio: "At 1pm, resistance in Sanfaturchio collapsed quite suddenly. The relief was indescribable and, seeing our gasping soldiers, one sensed it immediately. Both the assaulting companies were very near the limit & both had suffered severely. Sprawled riflemen and their German opponents lay scattered down the main street and the town was full of badly injured and dead soldiers of both sides. H Coy began their assault on San Felice cemetery at about 2.30pm. One of our troops had already penetrated very close to the church there and were blasting away at the defenders. H Coy broke in after 1/2 hour hand to hand fighting inside the

church itself & within the cemetery. The Germans counter attacked at about 3.30pm. A fight with grenades & pistols ranged along the cemetery wall. Lt Webb Bowen even shot one Hun at the range of less than a foot."

CQMS Edmund O'Sullivan 2 LIR, "It was still broad daylight when I brought up a cooked meal for E Company across country following the route of the forward troops. As the light faded, a burst of machine gun fire shattered the lintel above my head. I persuaded a party consisting of my driver and the stretcher bearers to make a dash with the empty containers for the jeep parked some 20 yards away behind an outbuilding. We had started to move when a shell burst outside the door, killing one and wounding one other."

The US 8th Air Force carries out raids on Berlin and the synthetic fuel plants at Leuna-Merseburg, which then continue on to Russia.

A further Russians assault against the Finns opens in eastern Karelia. The Red Army begins an offensive between lakes Ladoga and Onega on the northern front.

1945

Organized resistance on Okinawa ends after 82 days of the bloodiest fighting in the Pacific, during which 98,654 Japanese have been killed and 6,922 captured. U.S. losses were 6,990 killed and 29,598 wounded.

Roll of Honour – June 21

Representing their comrades who died on this day

1915

+MAYNARD, S

Royal Irish Rifles. 2nd Btn. Rifleman. 8895. Died 21/06/1915. Age 17, Son of Robert and Ellen Maynard, of 99, Argyle Street, Belfast. Calais Southern Cemetery, France

1916

+DAVIS, John Henry

Royal Army Medical Corps. Captain. Died 21/06/1916. Age 51. Son of Robert Davis, of Belfast. Belfast City Cemetery

+McCUE, James

Royal Irish Fusiliers, 7th Btn. Private. 21659. Died 21/06/1916. Native of Belfast. Son of the late James McCue. Bethune Town Cemetery, France

+McGOWAN, Henry

RMLI - Royal Marine Light Infantry. Private. PLY/17670. Plymouth Contingent, RND. Died 21/06/1916. Aged 17. Volunteered for active service, enlisting in Belfast in November 1914, giving a false date of birth. He served on the Gallipoli Peninsula, Turkey, in 1915 and later in France. Son of Daniel (fisherman) and Hannah McGowan, Mullaghacall, Portstewart. Bois-de-Noulette British Cemetery, Aix-Noulette, France. Portstewart WM. Agherton Parish Church WM. Agherton Parish Church RH. IMR

+MILLAR, James

Royal Irish Rifles, 8th Btn. Rifleman. 8/15592. Died 21/06/1916. Age 19. Son of Mrs. Mary Millar, of 19, Pitt St., Belfast. Authuille Military Cemetery, Authuille, France

+REILLY, Patrick Joseph

Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers. 9th Btn. B Coy. Private. 17693, Died 24/06/1916. Age 28. Son of Mrs. Annabella Reilly, of 10, Urney Rd., Strabane, Co. Tyrone. Cerisy-Gailly French Cemetery

1917

+ADAMS, J

Royal Irish Rifles. 9th Btn. Rifleman. 12/586. Died 21/06/1917. Age 24. Son of James C. and Agnes Adams, of Carncullagh, Dervock. Derry House Cemetery No 2. Belgium

+AUSTIN, James

Manchester Regiment. 13th Btn. 2nd Lieutenant James. Died of wounds 21/06/1917. Born on 02/12/1888 at Lismurnaghan, Ahoghill. Son of Hugh and Elizabeth Austin, nee Knowles, Belfast, though formerly of Ahoghill, Ballymena. He was the brother of Hugh Austin. Salonika Military Cemetery.

+CAMPBELL, Hugh

Royal Irish Rifles, 8th Btn. Serjeant.12650. Died 21/06/1917. Belfast newspapers of 12/07/1917 reported that he had received an award. He was a member of the East Belfast Regiment, Ulster Volunteer Force, and Holywood Loyal Orange Lodge No.1906. Prior to enlistment he was chauffeur to Mr. Frank Workman, The Moat, Strandtown. Husband to Jeannie Campbell, 8 Lennox Terrance, Holywood. Ypres (Menin Gate) Memorial, West-Vlaanderen, Belgium.

+CORKIN, Thomas Robert

Royal Irish Rifles, 16th (Pioneer) Btn. Rifleman. 186. Died 21/06/1917. Age 23. Awarded the Ulster Division Certificate for gallantry for his actions at the time of his death. Son of James and Rachel Corkin, of Ballygargin, Portadown. Wytschaete Military Cemetery, Belgium

+HUGHES, D J

Leinster Regiment, Depot. Corporal.1585. Died 21/06/1917. Age 24. Son of Thomas and Sarah Hughes, of 21, Bank St., Belfast. Milltown Roman Catholic Cemetery, Belfast

+McCALLUM, John

Royal Irish Rifles, 8th Btn. Serjeant.12335. Died 21/06/1917. Age 23. Son of Margaret McCallum, of 26, Peveril St., Ormeau Rd., Belfast, and the late John McCallum. Ypres (Menin Gate) Memorial, Belgium

+McCONNELL, John

Connaught Rangers, 5th Btn. Corporal.10695. Died 21/06/1917. He was born in Ballymoney, lived at Rasharkin

and enlisted in Glasgow. He had fought at Gallipoli and was later moved to Salonika, Greece. He died near the town of Lahana. Lahana Military Cemetery, Greece.

+MILLS, J

Royal Irish Rifles, 16th (Pioneer) Btn. Rifleman. 888. Died 21/06/1917. Age 20. Son of Margaret J. Mills, of 41, Majestic St., Belfast, and the late Henry Mills. Wytschaete Military Cemetery, Belgium

+NELSON, Joseph

Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, 11th Btn. Private. 26365. Died 21/06/1917. Born in Upperlands. Enlisted in Glasgow. Private Joseph Nelson (26365) and Private Samuel Nelson (26366), with consecutive soldier numbers with the 11th Inniskilling Fusiliers, both from Upperlands, seem to have enlisted together in Glasgow. It is suspected that that they are brothers, but no conclusive evidence has been found as yet. Bailleul Communal Cemetery Extension, Nord, France

+WHELAN, Samuel

Royal Irish Rifles, 8th Btn. Rifleman. 1417. Died 21/06/1917. Born Ballynure 10/02/1898. Enlisted Belfast. Son of Charles and Selina (nee Walker) Whelan, of Black Lane, Dromore and 16 Ewart's Row, Belfast. In 1911 Samuel was boarding with the Ritchie family, Moss Road, Ballyclare. Ypres (Menin) Memorial, Belgium. Ballyclare WM. St John's C of I Ballyclare RH

+WILSON, George

Royal Irish Rifles. 16th (Pioneer) Btn. Serjeant. 668. Died 21/06/1917. Age 36. Son of Margaret Wilson; husband of

Ellen Wilson, of 60, Hill St., Lurgan. Wytschaete Military Cemetery, Belgium

1918

+BROWNE, Maxmilian Herbert

Royal Irish Fusiliers. Attached to 108 Trench Mortar Bty. Captain. MC. Twice Mentioned in Despatches. Died 21/06/1918. Age 22. Max was born on 28/05/1896, the son of George Burrowes Browne and Margaret Browne of "Lisnamara", Ormeau Road, Belfast. After attending Bangor Grammar School 1905 - 06, and RBAI, he joined the Training Corps on 18/06/1915. He was killed at 5.40 pm during a training exercise at 22 Corps School. He was conducting an anti-aircraft practice on the range with live bomb ammunition. The ammunition had been examined and the fuses cut by Max, three rounds had been fired but the fourth exploded in the gun. As well as Max, who was killed instantaneously, two other men died of wounds sustained in the incident. His MC was a King's Birthday Honour from 03/06/1918, so there is no citation. Max is buried in Esquelbecq Military Cemetery, Nord, France. RBAI WM.

+JONES, John George

Army Service Corps. Private. M/348782. Died 21/06/1918 at home. Aged 20. Son of John and Sarah Eliza Jones, of Church Hill, Caledon. By the time of the 1911 census, John was 12 years old and was living with the Ferry family in Mineveigh, Newmills. Caledon (St. John) C of I Churchyard, Co. Tyrone. Dungannon WM, St John's RH, Newmills LOL 183 RH

+ MAYNE, William

RN. AB. J19567. Served in HMS Ajax at Jutland. Died 21/06/1918. Enrolled 09/10/1914 for 12 years. Served until his death by illness on 21/06/1918 in HMS Colossus. In Ajax 16/10/1913 - 26/07/1916. Boy service in Impregnable, Theseus, Vivid and Ajax (13/08/1912 - 16/10/1913). War service in Ajax, Hector, Vivid, Cassandra and Colossus. Born Antrim 09/10/1896. A sister Agnes lived at Dunamoy, Ballyclare. ADM 188/686/19567. Lyness Royal Navy Cemetery, Orkney. Ballyclare WM. Second Ballyeaston Presbyterian Church RH

+McNEILL, Hugh

Royal Marine Light Infantry. Lance Corporal. PO/10353. Died 21/06/1918. U-boat sank SS Montebello, Ushant. The 4,324 ton vessel, built in 1911 for the Ellerman Wilson Line, went down with the loss of 41 lives. Enrolled Belfast 07/07/1899. Served to 09/09/1912 when he enrolled in RFR. Recalled full time 15/07/1914. Wounded in Naval Brigade action at Antwerp 1914. Born Belfast 05/01/1881. Son of Annie McNeill, James Street, Harryville, Ballymena. Also Bute St., Jennymount, Belfast. All Saints RC Church, Ballymena. Portsmouth Naval Memorial. ADM 159/18/10353

+SMITH, John

Royal Irish Rifles, 10th Btn. Private.17/471. transf. to (379708) 233rd Employment Coy. Labour Corps Died 21/06/1918. Age 45 years old. Son of David and Catherine Smith, of 111, Bray St., Belfast. Terlincthun British Cemetery, Wimille, France

1940

+HANNA, James

RN. AB. C/JX 144129. Died 21/07/1940. Age 33. HMS Phoenix. Son of William John and Elizabeth Hanna, Belfast. Chatham Naval Memorial, Panel 35

+KANE, Henry

RN. Signaller. Died 21/06/1940. He spent the entirety of World War I at sea and participated in the Battle of Jutland on the destroyer HMS Attack. In 1918, Signaller Harry Kane was in the destroyer HMS Phoenix when she was torpedoed by the Austrian U-27. After the war, he sailed on the destroyer HMS Vanoc to support the Baltic States in the Russian Civil War. Upon his discharge from the Royal Navy in 1920, he immediately joined the Royal Fleet Reserve. For the next two decades he led a land-based life but spent one week per year at sea as part of Reserve service. He was called up in July 1939, and when the war began was serving on the destroyer HMS Eclipse guarding the convoy traffic off the Western Approaches. In 1940, at the special request of his former commander on the Eclipse, he joined the Q ship HMS Cape Howe. SS Cape Howe was purchased by Lyle Shipping Company on 07/02/1934, being originally built in 1930. On 15/09/1939 she was taken over by the Royal Navy, converted into an anti-submarine "Q" ship and renamed Prunella (pendant X.02). This was his last ship, as he met his end when she was torpedoed and sunk off the South-West Approaches with heavy loss of life on 21/06/1940 by Günter Kuhnke in U-28. He made it to a life raft but succumbed to his injuries. Thirteen men survived on a raft, picked up on 27th June 150 miles off Ushant (48 47 N, 7 59 W). Edenderry LOL 322. Son of William Henry and

Margaret Kane, Portadown. Husband to Sarah Kane, Portadown. Plymouth Naval Memorial, Panel 39. St Mark's Portadown WM. Portadown WM

1942

+DAVIDSON, Alexander

Royal Artillery. 2 Lt. A.A. Regt. 5 Bty. Sergeant. 7007149. Died of wounds on 21/06/1942 along with three of his comrades, after being hit by shellfire at Tobruk the previous day. Their gun position was sited some 2¼ miles south of Tobruk docks, on a broad plateau above an escarpment and about a thousand yards east of the road running almost due south out of Tobruk. Their Navy, Army and Air Force Institutes (NAAFI) Building was on the same plateau but slightly further north. The Axis Forces (21 Panzer Division) swept through their gun position some time between 1430 hrs and 1700 hrs on Saturday 20 June and reached the harbour area shortly afterwards.

The other men who died were Lieutenant (Acting Captain) John Malcolmson Gibson from Newtownards, Gunner David McClinton from Newtownards, and Gunner George Alfred Rayner from Glastonbury in Somerset. During WW2 relatives of Sergeant Alexander Davidson also served with the Royal Artillery, as did other family members – his wife's brother, Joseph Arnold from Greenwell Street, Newtownards; Davy Savage (his wife's sister May's husband) and his wife's cousin Julius (Jules) Dorrian of Movilla Street, Newtownards.

Alexander Davidson was born around 1902. He was a son of Hugh James and Julia Isabel Davidson who lived at 3

William Street, Newtownards. Hugh James Davidson served in the First World War and he and Julia had at least five children. Robert (served with the Royal Irish Rifles and then as a bomb disposal sergeant with the Royal Air Force). Thomas (served for 28 years with the Royal Air Force). William (served with the Royal Irish Rifles and died at the age of 22).

Alexander Davidson joined the Royal Irish Rifles when he was 16 years old and served for ten years. He spent four years in India. Then he worked as a bricklayer before joining the Royal Artillery in 1937/38.

Alexander Davidson (aged 22) and Agnes Kennedy Arnold (aged 21) were married on 18/03/1927 in Newtownards Registrar's Office and they lived at 13 Wallace's Street No. 2, Newtownards. Alexander and Agnes Davidson (nee Arnold) had six children. James Arnold (Jim, served with the RAF). Joseph Arnold (Joe, post-war Joe Davidson served with the Royal Air Force Regiment and then the Parachute Regiment)

Knightsbridge War Cemetery, Acroma, Libya. Newtownards and District WM. St Mark's C of I Parish Church, Newtownards RH

+GIBSON, John Malcomson

Royal Artillery. 45 LAA Regt. 5 Bty. Lieutenant. 126704. Died 21/06/1942. Aged 30. He joined the Battery before the outbreak of war and became a Sergeant. Then he was posted to England where he obtained his commission. He served with the Middle East Forces and initially he was reported missing believed killed during heavy fighting on 20/21 June 1942. Died of wounds along with three of his

comrades, after being hit by shellfire at Tobruk the previous day. Their gun position was sited some 2¼ miles south of Tobruk docks, on a broad plateau above an escarpment and about a thousand yards east of the road running almost due south out of Tobruk. Their Navy, Army and Air Force Institutes (NAAFI) Building was on the same plateau but slightly further north. The Axis Forces (21 Panzer Division) swept through their gun position some time between 1430 hrs and 1700 hrs on Saturday 20 June and reached the harbour area shortly afterwards. The other men who died were Sergeant Alexander Davidson from Newtownards, Gunner David McClinton from Newtownards, and Gunner George Alfred Rayner from Glastonbury in Somerset. John Gibson attended Castle Gardens Public Elementary School, Newtownards and then Regent House School, Newtownards from 1927 until 1932. Then he went to Teacher Training College. Shortly before the outbreak of the Second World War he was appointed Principal of Ballystockart Public Elementary School and, while he was there, he and his mother and sister worshipped in First Comber Presbyterian Church. He was an accomplished all-round sportsman – a successful sprinter, he played rugby for Ards Rugby Club and soccer for the Drones in the Summer League. He was a keen tennis player and he also played hockey. He was a member of the choir and congregation of Newtownards First Presbyterian Church. Born on 29/03/1912 in Bangor Road, Newtownards. Son of James and Mary Eleanor. Gibson. The Gibson family lived in Donaghadee Road, Newtownards, Kimberley Buildings, Newtownards, and Glenside, Ballystockart, Comber. Knightsbridge War Cemetery, Acroma, Libya. Newtownards and District WM; First Newtownards Presbyterian Church RH; Regent House School; Queen's University Belfast WM;

Stranmillis College RH. Family grave headstone in Bangor Abbey Graveyard; First Comber Presbyterian Church

1942 HM SUBMARINE P514

+McALISTER, James

RN. Petty Officer. P/SSX 15157. HM Submarine P 514. Died 21/06/1942. Age 28. P514 was an ex-US Navy boat, formerly R-19, and was used to train escort groups off the east coast of Canada. . Son of James and Kathleen McAlister, Ballynastraid, Bushmills. Husband to Ina McAlister, Feigh, Bushmills. Portsmouth Naval Memorial, Panel 62

+MURRAY, Robert

RN. Stoker Second Class. D/KX 134458. Died 21/06/1942. Age 19. HM Submarine P 514. USS R-19 was transferred to the Royal Navy on 9 March 1942 at New London. P 514 was sunk by accident in western Atlantic. She was on passage around the coast of Newfoundland from Argentia to St Johns. On 20/06/1942 P 514 (Lt. Walter Augustus Phillimore, RN) [Lt.Cdr. Richard Michael Eames Pain, RN was not in command but was taking passage] left the Canadian village of Argentia bound for St Johns, Newfoundland. At 0300 hours on the 21st the Canadian minesweeper HCMS Georgian (A/Lt.Cdr. A.G. Stanley, RCNR) was waiting to provide escort for a convoy bound for Sydney. The Georgian, unaware that any friendly submarines were in the area, assumed that the dark shape of P 514 crossing her bow, was an enemy vessel. The Georgian rammed the mystery submarine amidships and reported it sunk in position 46°33N, 53°39W. A rescue

mission was immediately sent out but no survivors were found. A Board of Enquiry into the accident accepted that the Commanding Officer of the Georgian had acted correctly as there had been no reply from the submarine to his identification challenge. Son of Robert and Sarah Murray, Ballymena. Plymouth Naval Memorial. Panel 71

+PATTERSON, Hugh

RN. Telegraphist. D/JX 156607. HM Submarine P 514. Died 21/06/1942. Age 20. He joined the merchant service when he was 15 years old. After a few months he transferred to the RN. He had seen much foreign service. Son of Archibald and Isabella Patterson, Hillview Terrace, Greencastle. (Belfast Weekly Telegraph 10//07/1942). Plymouth Naval Memorial, Panel 49

1942

+DAVIDSON, Alexander

Royal Artillery. 2 Lt. A.A. Regt. 5 Bty. Sergeant. 7007149. Died of wounds on 21/06/1942 along with three of his comrades, after being hit by shellfire at Tobruk the previous day. Their gun position was sited some 2¼ miles south of Tobruk docks, on a broad plateau above an escarpment and about a thousand yards east of the road running almost due south out of Tobruk. Their Navy, Army and Air Force Institutes (NAAFI) Building was on the same plateau but slightly further north. The Axis Forces (21 Panzer Division) swept through their gun position some time between 1430 hrs and 1700 hrs on Saturday 20 June and reached the harbour area shortly afterwards. The other men who died were Lieutenant (Acting Captain) John Malcolmson Gibson

from Newtownards, Gunner David McClinton (see entry page 29 below) from Newtownards, and Gunner George Alfred Rayner from Glastonbury in Somerset. During WW2 relatives of Sergeant Alexander Davidson also served with the Royal Artillery, as did other family members – his wife's brother, Joseph Arnold from Greenwell Street, Newtownards; Davy Savage (his wife's sister May's husband) and his wife's cousin Julius (Jules) Dorrian of Movilla Street, Newtownards.

Alexander Davidson was born around 1902. He was a son of Hugh James and Julia Isabel Davidson who lived at 3 William Street, Newtownards. Hugh James Davidson served in the First World War and he and Julia had at least five children. Robert (served with the Royal Irish Rifles and then as a bomb disposal sergeant with the Royal Air Force). Thomas (served for 28 years with the Royal Air Force). William (served with the Royal Irish Rifles and died at the age of 22).

Alexander Davidson joined the Royal Irish Rifles when he was 16 years old and served for ten years. He spent four years in India. Then he worked as a bricklayer before joining the Royal Artillery in 1937/38.

Alexander Davidson (aged 22) and Agnes Kennedy Arnold (aged 21) were married on 18/03/1927 in Newtownards Registrar's Office and they lived at 13 Wallace's Street No. 2, Newtownards. Alexander and Agnes Davidson (nee Arnold) had six children. James Arnold (Jim, served with the RAF). Joseph Arnold (Joe, post-war Joe Davidson served with the Royal Air Force Regiment and then the Parachute Regiment)

Knightsbridge War Cemetery, Acroma, Libya. Newtownards and District WM. St Mark's C of I Parish Church, Newtownards RH

+GIBSON, John Malcomson

Royal Artillery. 45 LAA Regt. 5 Bty. Lieutenant. 126704. Died 21/06/1942. Aged 30. He joined the Battery before the outbreak of war and became a Sergeant. Then he was posted to England where he obtained his commission. He served with the Middle East Forces and initially he was reported missing believed killed during heavy fighting on 20/21 June 1942. Died of wounds along with three of his comrades, after being hit by shellfire at Tobruk the previous day. Their gun position was sited some 2¼ miles south of Tobruk docks, on a broad plateau above an escarpment and about a thousand yards east of the road running almost due south out of Tobruk. Their Navy, Army and Air Force Institutes (NAAFI) Building was on the same plateau but slightly further north. The Axis Forces (21 Panzer Division) swept through their gun position some time between 1430 hrs and 1700 hrs on Saturday 20 June and reached the harbour area shortly afterwards. The other men who died were Sergeant Alexander Davidson from Newtownards, Gunner David McClinton from Newtownards, and Gunner George Alfred Rayner from Glastonbury in Somerset. John Gibson attended Castle Gardens Public Elementary School, Newtownards and then Regent House School, Newtownards from 1927 until 1932. Then he went to Teacher Training College. Shortly before the outbreak of the Second World War he was appointed Principal of Ballystockart Public Elementary School and, while he was there, he and his mother and sister worshipped in First

Comber Presbyterian Church. He was an accomplished all-round sportsman – a successful sprinter, he played rugby for Ards Rugby Club and soccer for the Drones in the Summer League. He was a keen tennis player and he also played hockey. He was a member of the choir and congregation of Newtownards First Presbyterian Church. Born on 29/03/1912 in Bangor Road, Newtownards. Son of James and Mary Eleanor. Gibson. The Gibson family lived in Donaghadee Road, Newtownards, Kimberley Buildings, Newtownards, and Glenside, Ballystockart, Comber. Knightsbridge War Cemetery, Acroma, Libya. Newtownards and District WM; First Newtownards Presbyterian Church RH; Regent House School; Queen's University Belfast WM; Stranmillis College RH. Family grave headstone in Bangor Abbey Graveyard; First Comber Presbyterian Church

+McCLINTON, David

Royal Artillery. 2 LAA Regt. 5 Bty. Gunner. 1468863. Died 21/06/1942. Son of Andrew and Agnes McClinton; husband to Martha McClinton, of Newtownards. Knightsbridge War Cemetery, Acroma. Newtownards WM. See also entry for DAVIDSON, Alexander above

1944

+JOHNSTON, John Oswald

RAFVR. Sergeant (Air Bomber). 1048606. Died 22/06/1944. 619 Sqdn. based at Dunholme Lodge. On the shortest night of the year he was aboard Lancaster I LL977 PG-H on a mission to a Synthetic Oil Plant at Wesseling which is South of Cologne. The aircraft was hit by Flak at 17,000 Feet in

the Aachen area and exploded. The explosion threw the Pilot out of the aircraft and he survived to be a Prisoner of War however all others aboard were killed. Rheinberg War Cemetery, Nordrhein-Westfalen, Germany

+McCRACKEN, George Anthony

Royal Ulster Rifles, 2nd Btn. D Coy. Rifleman. 7013828. Died 21/06/1944. Aged 23. Wounded by shrapnel the previous day. Two of his brothers served. Family home at 19 Ravensdale St., Belfast. His wife and son resided in Plymouth. Bayeux War Cemetery, Calvados, France

+McLAUGHLIN, Thomas

Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, 6th Btn. Fusilier. 6984348. Died 21/06/1944. Son of Mrs. E. McLaughlin of Coleraine. Orvieto War Cemetery, Italy

+O'DONNELL, William Gallagher

King's Own Scottish Borderers, 1st Btn. Private. 3065970. Died 21/06/1944. Aged 21. Son of Henry O'Donnell and of Rose Ellen O'Donnell (nee Gallagher), of Lurgan. La Deliverande War Cemetery, Douvres, Calvados, France

+WILSON, Samuel Robinson

London Irish Rifles, 2nd Btn. Rifleman. 7020667. Died 21/06/1944. Aged 23. Son of John Wilson and of Sarah Wilson (nee Hayes), of Rasharkin. Orvieto War Cemetery, Italy

1946

+JOHNSTON, Thomas Herbert

RAFVR. Leading Aircraftman. 1798342. Died 21/06/1946.
Age 25. Son of George and Annie Elizabeth Johnston,
Aghalane, Co. Fermanagh. Celle War Cemetery, Germany

VETERAN

OLLEY, Robert

RE Lt 292553 MC North West Europe 1944-45 London
Gazette 21/06/1945 BSc 1937 QUB

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We will remember them

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forward to remembrance ni at**

houstonmckelvey@mac.com

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

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