



remembrance ni



**Belfast
Telegraph
editor, a
Naval
reserve
officer, was
key man in
Churchill's
war staff**

On the anniversary of his death we remember John E Sayers, HMS Caroline reservist, survivor of HMS Courageous, key player in Winston Churchill's Map Room and post war Editor of the Belfast Telegraph.

Jack Sayers, RNVR. Lieutenant Commander, served in the Ulster Division based in HMS Caroline from 1911 -1969. Jack Sayers was the son of the editor of the Belfast Telegraph. He was in HMS Courageous on 16/09/1939 when it was torpedoed west of Ireland by a U boat. His name was not on the original list of survivors. A debate at

Stormont, where his father was observing proceedings, was interrupted to confirm his safety. A few weeks later his father suffered a heart attack and died at his home on Kirkliston Drive on 15/10/1939.

Jack Sayers was educated at Methodist College, Belfast where he was Head Boy. On leaving school he followed his father into the Belfast Telegraph as a junior reporter. Over the next few years he covered anything and everything from meetings of Belfast's Harbour Board to Collegians' rugby matches in which he was playing (signing himself J S Edwards). On his father's accession to the editorship in 1937, he became the parliamentary correspondent at Stormont. In 1937 he enlisted in the RNVR Ulster Division.

In November 1939, six weeks after the torpedoing of Courageous, he was recruited to Winston Churchill's naval/military "map room" which had been set up by his friend and fellow Ulster Division RNVR officer, Richard Pim, a future head of the RUC. This was an extraordinary makeshift map room which moved with Churchill from Admiralty House to Downing Street. This was kept up to date day and night and gave precise information relating to the position of every British and Allied warship, of convoys, their speed, the numbers of ships involved, their escorts and the estimated position of any known enemy naval units at sea, together with full comparable military information. Here the course of the war was plotted. Sayers manned the room and was called by Churchill, "The Ulsterman with the card index memory". The map room and its Ulster staff also travelled to conferences abroad including Newfoundland for the Atlantic Charter Meeting with President Roosevelt on HMS Prince of Wales, to Washington and Qubec, to Malta, Alexandria,

Cassablanca, Marrakesh, to Yalta for the meeting with Stalin, and finally to the Potsdam Conference in 1945.

Shortly after the war in October 1945, Jack Sayers married a widow, Mrs Daphne Godby, and returned to Belfast where he was appointed political correspondent at the Telegraph then under the editorship of his uncle, RM Sayers. In 1953 he became the third member of his family to be editor of the Belfast Telegraph. He supported Terence O'Neill's political vision. He retired on 17/03/1969, in poor health and disheartened by the turn of events. He died five months later on 30/08/1969.

On this day – August 30

1940

The British Battleship Valiant, the Aircraft Carrier Illustrious and two Cruisers leave Gibraltar bound for Alexandria to reinforce Admiral Cunningham's Mediterranean fleet.

In an effort to avert war between her allies Romania and Hungary and to secure his southern flank prior to attacking the Soviet Union, Germany and Italy under the second Vienna Award compel Romania to cede large chunks of her territory to Hungary and Bulgaria, in exchange for a German guarantee of security for the rump Romanian state.

Vichy France signs Matsuoka-Henry Pact allowing Japan to station troops in French Indochina and to use airfields, ports, and railroads.

1941

Manufacturers in the United States complain to the government that they are making do without steel in order to supply the British war needs, while the British continue to export steel to South American countries.

The German 20th Panzer division destroys the northern Front's already broken Soviet 48th Army, and takes the town of Mga, 40 kms to the Southeast of Leningrad. Nazi forces began a siege of Leningrad during World War II that lasted nearly two and a half years.

1942



Men from 1 Royal Ulster Rifles, 1 Airborne Division, demonstrating the 2-inch mortar.

The Japanese ordered the 20,100 prisoners of war in Changi Jail, Singapore, to sign an undertaking not to escape. The POWs refused and they were crowded into Selerang Barracks (which had accommodation for 120) until they signed under duress on 4 September.

The photograph shows the crowded Barrack Square during what became known as the 'Selerang Incident'.

The formal annexation of Luxembourg to Reich leads to a general strike. Use of French accents in the written Luxembourg dialect is now liable to fines.

With the Punishment Battalions as rear guards, the Soviet 62nd and parts of 64th Army escapes encirclement by the 48th Panzer Corps and withdraw across the Chervlennaya river.

U.S. Naval and Army forces occupy Adak, Aleutian Is. for an air and naval base.

Chinese claim the recapture of the whole of Kiangsi, which was captured in last Japanese offensive.

1943

General Montgomery addressed men of 168 Brigade near Fiumefreddo on the east coast of Sicily:

Monty: "Where do the best soldiers come from?"

Men: "Co Brixton !".... "Glasgow !"

Of course, the correct answer should have been.....Donegal.



General Montgomery addressing men of 168 Brigade

An air battle between 44 USAAF P-38s and 75 Luftwaffe fighters commences above Italy. The the P-38s were escorting a large formation of B-26s on their way to bomb marshaling yards at Aversa. The Americans lose 13 aircraft and shoot down 9 Axis aircraft, thus allowing the B-26s to make an unmolested bombing run to their target, where they cause extreme damage without loss.

The Danish Prime Minister, Scavenius refuses to serve under the Germans.

Taganrog on the Sea of Azov is evacuated by the Germans.

1944

The U.S. 3rd Army, whose 4th Armored Division is already at Troyes is ordered to continue East until the tanks run dry

and from that point, to advance on foot, in order to get across the Meuse river.

Canadian Armored forces with the British 8th Army attack west of Pesaro. Without supporting artillery, they are beaten back by the Germans, who destroy or badly damage 32 of the 50 tanks engaged in the attack. German troops withdraw from Bulgaria.

Ploesti, the center of the Romanian oil industry, falls to Soviet troops.

1945



The Royal Navy entered harbour in Hong Kong to liberate the territory from the Japanese. 500 men were landed from HMS Swiftsure and Euryalus to clear the dockyard.



in 1945 the liberation of Hong Kong began. The Royal Navy entered harbour in Hong Kong to liberate the territory from the Japanese. 500 men were landed from HMS Swiftsure and Euryalus and cleared the dockyard that evening. Marines clashed with Japanese suicide detachments. On August 6th and 9th, 1945, the US military had dropped atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The Japanese Emperor surrendered unconditionally on August 15, 1945. General Douglas MacArthur arrives in Japan and makes Yokosuka the Supreme Allied Command Headquarters.

U.S. occupation of Japan begins, 11th Airborne Division lands at Atsugi airfield and 4th Marine Regiment lands at Kurihama naval base at Yokosuka and report 'obsequious bows and smiles' from soldiers and civilians. Gen. Douglas MacArthur arrived in Japan and set up Allied occupation headquarters.

Two Japanese submarines, the largest in the world (5,500 tons), surrender in Sagami Bay after completing their first and only operational trip.

Roll of Honour – August 30

Representing their comrades who died on this day

1915

+O'HARA, Henry Desmond

1st Battalion, Royal Dublin Fusiliers. Lieutenant/acting-Captain. DSO. Died 30/08/1915. Aged 23. He served on the Gallipoli Peninsula, Turkey. The 29th Division, which included the First Royal Dublin Fusiliers, was decimated in the First Battle of Krithia. By the end of day on 28/04/1915 the Fusiliers were down to only 374 men and one officer Lieutenant O'Hara. For his bravery and leadership during the battle, Lieutenant O'Hara was awarded the Distinguished Service Order. He was the only son of Mr. William T. O'Hara, R.M., Oriel House, Ballincollig, County Cork, and the Castle, Portstewart; the grandson of Rev. James Dunn O'Hara, of the Castle, Portstewart, and O'Harabrook, Ballymoney; and the nephew of Dr. O'Hara (Lord Bishop of Cashel). Gibraltar, North Front/Garrison Cemetery. IMR. (Coleraine Chronicle of 01/01/1916; Northern Constitution 11/09/1915)

+MILES, Richard

Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, 1st Btn. Private. 12641. Died 30/08/1915. Age 16. Son of William Miles, of 6, Edith St., Belfast. Helles Memorial, Gallipoli, Turkey

+SHARKEY, Patrick

Royal Irish Rifles, 6th Btn. Rifleman. 11436. Died of wounds sustained in Gallipoli 30/08/1915. Born in Blaris, he enlisted at Lisburn. Alexandria (Chatby) Military and War Memorial Cemetery, Egypt

1916

+CRAIG, Eric Erichsen

Royal Irish Rifles. Second Lieutenant. Died 30/08/1916. Age 21. Educated at Foyle College Londonderry where he played in the school's XV rugby team and QUB where he read medicine 1915 - 16. His aspiration was to follow in his two brothers' footsteps. At time of deceased's death, a brother, Lieutenant F W Craig, medical superintendent officer of health for Londonderry, was at the Front with the RAMC while another brother, Lieutenant Alexander V Craig, RAMC, had served for a year on the Western Front. Eric joined the Training Corps and in December 1915 received his commission in the Royal Irish Rifles. He went out to France on 18/07/1916 with the 16th Royal Irish Rifles (2nd County Down Pioneers) as part of 36 (Ulster) Division, mostly made up from Belfast and Lurgan based soldiers. He was killed in action instantaneously by a German trench mortar 43 days after arriving in France. He was the son of Dr James C and Matilda Spence Craig, Carlisle Terrace, Londonderry. A total of 70 former students of Foyle College lost their lives in WW1. His name and that of many of his first XV were among a list of Great War dead, associated with Foyle College, read aloud during the annual prize giving ceremony, held on Thursday 19/12/1918. Interred at

St Quentin Cabaret Military Cemetery, Belgium. Diamond WM, Londonderry. Carlisle Road Presbyterian Church RH.

+DINES, Alexander

Royal Irish Rifles, 1st Btn. att'd. 25th Light Trench Mortar Bty. Rifleman. 6741. Died 30/08/1916. Age 23. Son of William and Ellen Dines, of 16, Ann St., Newtownards. Vermelles British Cemetery, France

+KEARNEY, William Arthur

RN. Warrant Mechanician. Long Service and Good Conduct Medal. HMS Warspite. Died 30/08/1916. Age 40. Warrant Mechanician - rank introduced to provide an avenue of promotion for selected Stoker ratings. Received skill training similar to that given to Engine Room Artificers. Mainly employed for shore training of Stoker ratings. Son of William and Jeannie Kearney, Inverness Terrace, Cliftonville Rd., Belfast; husband to Agnes Kearney, Beach Vista, Larne Harbour. Carnmoney Cemetery. St Silas' Church WM

+McKEE, William

Royal Irish Rifles. 2nd Btn. Corporal. 4885. Died 30/08/1916. Youngest son of Capt. Hugh and Mrs. Charlotte McKee, of Saul-Street, Downpatrick. Puchvilliers British Cemetery, France

+PETERS, Joseph

Royal Irish Rifles, 2nd Btn. Rifleman. 7879. Died 30/08/1916. Age 27. Rfn. Peters enlisted on Tullymore Fair day in November 1915 in response to the strenuous appeal made for recruits. His brother Robert (23006)

Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers also served. Joseph was the third young man belonging to the second Broughshane Presbyterian congregation who died in defence of his King and country. Son of John and Anne Peters, of Tullymore, Broughshane. Pozieres British Cemetery, Ovillers-La-Boisselle, France. Second Broughshane Presbyterian Church RH

+PRENTICE, John

Royal Irish Rifles, 2nd Btn. Rifleman. 4876. Died 30/08/1916. Age 24. Son of George and Anne Prentice, of Ballynaris, Dromore. Pozieres British Cemetery, Ovillers-La-Boisselle, France

+TELFIER, Robert

Royal Irish Rifles, 1st Bn. att'd. 25th Light Trench Mortar Bty. Rifleman. Died 30/08/1916. Age 27. Husband to Mrs. Telfier, of 20, Broadbent St., Belfast. Vermelles British Cemetery, France

1918

+ADAMS, James

Royal Army Medical Corps. 36th Field Amb. Private. 59790. Died 30/08/1918. Age 19. Son of William J. and Fanny Adams, of 31, Third Avenue, Strandtown, Belfast. Daours Communal Cemetery Extension, France

+ANDREWS, John Joseph

Australian Infantry, A.I.F. 25th Btn. Private. 7011. Died 30/08/1918. Age 22. In 1911 John was working as a draper's assistant and living with his family at Mullinure,

Armagh. He emigrated to Australia between 1911 and 1914. He enlisted in 1917. Son of Mrs. Elizabeth Andrews, of Manilla St. East, Brisbane, Queensland. Daours Communal Cemetery Extension, France. Mall Presbyteriaan Church WM, Armagh

+CHAPMAN, George

Canadian Infantry, 1st Btn. Western Ontario Regiment. Private. 2448412. Died 30/08/1918. Age 31. Born at Maze, Co Down on 19/06/1887 to George and Prudence Chapman, nee Wilson. In 1901 his parents and siblings were residing at 31 Ballykeelartifinny, Co Down. George joined up at Windsor, Ontario, Canada, on 12/06/1917 aged 30. His residence in Canada was given as 308 Florida Avenue, Lorain, Ohio, occupation, labourer. He embarked from Canada on H.M.T. Metagama 30/09/1917, disembarked at Liverpool, 17/10/1917. The unit was taken to Canadian Camp at Bramshott, Hampshire and taken on strength with the 4th Canadian Reserve Battalion. On 22/02/1918 the battalion was posted to France to join 1st Battalion, disembarking the following day. The battalion then marched into Canadian Base Depot on the 23 February to await mobilization. On 26th February they joined the 1st Battalion. Son of Mrs. Prudence Chapman of Corcreeny, Hillsborough, Co. Down. Sun Quarry Cemetery, Cherisy, France

+IVES, J F

Royal Warwickshire Regiment, 1st Btn. Private. 50968. Died 30/08/1918. Age 18. Son of Frederick and Bertha Ives, of 2, Avonbeg St., Belfast. Ligny-St. Flochel British Cemetery, France

+McGOWAN, JAMES

RNVR. RND. AB. Z/1596 Clyde, (VR) Divisional Employment Coy. Died 30/08/1918. Age 23. Born 26/08/1895. Son of Elizabeth, Comber St., Knockbreda, Belfast. Queen's Cemetery, Bucquoy, France. St Jude's C of I Parish WM, Belfast

+SIMMS, Robert

Royal Irish Rifles, 2nd Btn. Lance Serjeant. 4209. Died 30/08/1918. Husband of Annie Simms, of 6, Annalee St., Belfast. Belfast City Cemetery

1941

+TODD, David Dawson

RAF. Sergeant. 530811. Died 30/08/1941. Aged 29. Lost in air operations while returning to his unit in the Mediterranean. He had been previously wounded in 1940 and had spent some time in hospital in England prior to returning to active service. He was employed in the office of Spence Brysons before enlisting in the RAF. He was a member of 1st Portadown BB Old Boys Silver Band. Son of Robert and Ann Todd of 72 Hanover Street Portadown; husband to Emily Somme Todd, of Portadown. Malta Memorial, Panel 2, Malta

1944

+DICK, Thomas

RAFVR. Sergeant (Air Gunner).1798176. Died 29. 30/08/1944. Aged 19. 12 Squadron. Aboard Avro Lancaster PD273 which took off from R.A.F. Wickenby for a raid on Stettin, Poland on the night of 29/30 August 1944. Survivor, Sergeant A. Madelaine Flight Engineer, stated, " Approaching the target we were told to descend below the cloud layer by the Master Bomber and we started our run at 10,000'. The flak was extremely heavy and we had to turn away to avoid debris from a Lancaster that exploded alongside us.

"Suddenly the mid upper gunner reported a fire beneath him and I started to don a portable oxygen bottle in preparation for going down the fuselage to help douse the fire. The navigator passed me on the way to the bomb aimers compartment breaking my intercom, connection. Looking down the fuselage all I could see was a white glow and a thick white vapour. Out of this came the wireless operator wearing his parachute, he stopped me from entering the fuselage to attend to the fire and indicated that I should join him in the bomb aimers compartment. The pilot then indicated that I should leave, I left, noting that all the engine were still running.

"I saw the wireless operator leave the aircraft and immediately open his chute which reminded me to open mine. Smoke was rising to 10,000' and I was falling in the target area and worried about landing in a fire."

Thomas' remains were buried along with his fellow Crew member, Sergeant (Air Gunner) Thomas Brian Dufty,1852960. Son of Adam and Annie Dick of

Carrickfergus, Co. Antrim. Old Garrison Cemetery, Poznan, Poland.

+MURRAY, Charles Malachi

RAF. Sergeant (Flight Engineer). 535937. MiD twice. Died 29 - 30/08/1944. Aged 27. 166 Squadron, RAF. On the night of 29 - 30/08/1944 he was aboard Avro Lancaster 1, PD261, AS-S as Flight Engineer when the aircraft left R.A.F. Kirmington, Lincolnshire on a mission to Stettin, Germany. 402 Lancaster Bombers took part in this raid of which 23 were lost including AS-S which is believed to have been shot down by a German Night Fighter with the loss of all on board. Having finished his initial training at Henlow, he was assigned to 6 Squadron and posted to the Middle East where he was stationed in Palestine and Egypt before the outbreak of war. Early in the war, his squadron was involved in the North African Campaign providing air cover and, for his services, he was awarded the 'Africa Star'. Following the allied victory at El Alemein, 6 Squadron was recalled to the United Kingdom. In October 1942, he was transferred to Coastal Command 228 Squadron. He flew many missions over the Atlantic in Sunderland flying boats, spotting German U-boats, which were ravaging allied convoys at the time. At different times he was stationed at Lough Neagh and Lough Erne. In March 1944 Charlie was transferred to 166 Squadron Bomber Command. Son of Patrick and Emily Murray from Acton, Co. Armagh. Charles Murray's remains are together with the rest of the Crew at Poznan Old Garrison Cemetery, Poland.

+ROBERTSON, Vivian Alexander

RAFVR. 502 Sqdn. Flying Officer. 157995. Died 30/08/1944. Son of William and Marion Ethel Robertson, of

Belfast. La Bernerie-en-Retz Communal Cemetery, France.
Newcastle WM

1945

+DEERY, Robert James

RAFVR. Flight Sergeant. 1522872. Died 30/08/1945. Aged 22. 232 Sqdn. Son of James and Edith Maud Deery, of Castlederg, Co. Tyrone. Singapore Memorial, Column 450

1947

+McKINNEY, Samuel Alexander

RAFVR. Pilot II. 1795958. Died 30/08/1947. Aged 23. 54 Squadron. Son of George and Esther McKinney of Belfast. His brother, Robert Love McKinney, also died in service. Dundonald Cemetery

VETERANS

AGNEW, Henry Murray

RAMC. Captain. Lurgan College. RBAI. Edinburgh University. QUB. Served 1914 - 18. In France from 28/07/1916. Born c1877, Armagh. Son of Dr. Samuel and Mary Agnew, Lurgan and High St., Armagh. Died 30/08/1950, Reading.

SAYERS, John E

HMS Caroline. RNVR. Lieutenant Commander. Ulster Division 1911 -1969. See article above.

Every Day is a Remembrance Day

We will remember them

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

remembrance ni

The **remembrance ni** programme is overseen by Very Rev Dr Houston McKelvey OBE, QVRM, TD who served as Chaplain to 102 and 105 Regiments Royal Artillery (TA), as Hon. Chaplain to RNR and as Chaplain to the RBL NI area and the Burma Star Association NI. Dr McKelvey is a Past President of Queen's University Services Club. He may be contacted at houstonmckelvey@mac.com
