



remembrance ni



**Caroline
WRNS
sang
soprano
and
tuned
depth
chargers**

**Wren
Rebecca
McCabe
served with
HMS
Caroline,**

Belfast from 1942-1944 before moving to the Signals Distribution Office, Belfast Castle in the run up to D-Day.

Only two weeks into McCabe's time in HMS Caroline, came one of the highlights of her service. In June 1942, King George VI and Queen Elizabeth (later the Queen Mother)



Women of the Royal Navy WRNS at HMS Caroline, Belfast in 1945. Photo from the Royal Navy Research Archives.

visited Belfast on board HMS Phoebe. While King George inspected the Royal Navy, the Queen inspected the women at HMS Caroline. Wren Rebecca McCabe had the honour of being in the front row for the royal inspection, which was captured by Royal Naval photographers.

Rebecca was born at 59 Palmer Street, Belfast, Co. Antrim on 31/08/1921 and later moved to 71 Twaddell Avenue, Belfast, Co. Antrim. She attended Woodvale School in North Belfast until the age of 14 when she left to work for Mourne Clothing Company in 1936. The business was on the Oldpark Road. Rebecca's job was rubbing soap along the selvages of the material so that sewing machines would run faster. She earned 10/11½ - ten shillings and eleven and a half pence.

In 1938, she joined her sisters Sadie and Margaret at Ewart's Linen Factory where they worked as pern winders. Rebecca became a warping apprentice and within two years was running her own machine. Warping was an intensive job; running linen thread from hundreds of spools through a reed onto beams. She would also have needed a keen eye to check selvages and to watch for "slubs" or bumps or knots in the thread which required cutting out.

In 1941, Ewart's Linen Factory was one of many buildings damaged in the Belfast Blitz.

Afterwards, Rebecca McCabe signed up to the WRNS, working in Mackies Factory until her call up in 1942.

She found herself based at HMS Caroline from 1942-1944. She was a maintenance Wren, which encompassed many tasks.

These included testing battery banks on trawlers, using hydrometers, and checking electrical contacts. While stationed at the Belfast base, she would also have gone out on depth charge practices.

Many of these young women ended up with impaired hearing, requiring ear syringing after these exercises.

Rebecca was also a soloist with the RN choir in the city.

In 1946, Rebecca McCabe married James Simmonds at Crumlin Road Methodist Church. Simmonds was a Londoner in the Royal Navy in 21st Escort Group. He had taken part in the Russian Convoys and had met the young Miss McCabe during their time at HMS Caroline. The couple held their reception at Inglis' Restaurant in Belfast's Corn

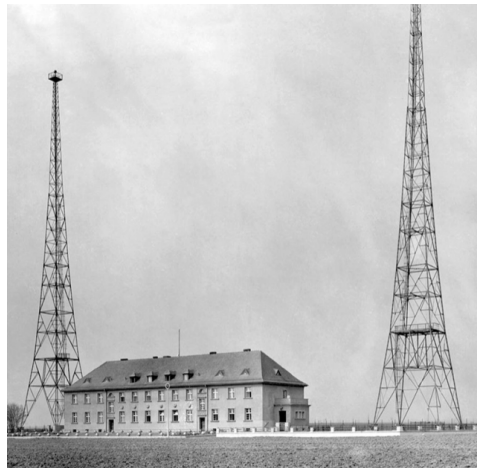
Market. They moved to England shortly after but returned to Northern Ireland in 1973. She was the mother of Caroline Simmond.

Born on 31/08/1921, Rebecca died 11/12/2006.

Acknowledgments - Scott Edgar, Wartime NI, Lennon Wylie

On this day – August 31

1939



Nazi agents dressed as Polish soldiers stage an attack on a radio station at Gleiwitz on Germany's eastern border. Hitler

will use the incident as a pretext to invade Poland the following day.

The British fleet is put on full alert.

1940

RAF's worst day in Battle of Britain: most bases out of action, 41 planes lost.

RAF 303 Squadron (Polish) flies first patrol and makes first kill.

Weekly rations in Vichy France now 4oz of sugar, 6oz spaghetti, 1.5oz rice and 3oz margarine per person.

1941

German Army Group South manages to move some of 17th Army across the Dnieper river Southeast of Kremenchuk.

British forces reach Hamadan, Iran and have now secured the Persian Gulf and its vital oilfields.

1942

Rommel begins his final attempt to break through at El Alamein in the battle of Alam Halfa. However, the 15th Panzer Division fails to break through the 8th Army's lines and sustains heavy casualties losing about 30 tanks forcing the Germans to withdraw back to their start lines.

1,200 Japanese reinforcements landed on Guadalcanal by 'Tokyo Express'.

The US aircraft-carrier Saratoga is attacked and damaged by a Japanese submarine near Santa Cruz.

1943

The RAF again pound Berlin (over 600 bombers) with more than 1,000 tons dropped, killing about 5,000 civilian's.

Hitler allows Manstein to make limited withdrawals in Ukraine.

The Japanese submarine I-8, reaches France after a marathon voyage from Penang in Malaya.

A U.S. carrier task force bombs Marcus I., Micronesia.

The government lifts its ban on "pleasure driving." Police had previously been able to stop cars at random and ask drivers their destination and purpose. If a patrolman wasn't happy with a driver's answer, he could confiscate the driver's gas ration stamps.

1944

The British 11th Armoured Division captures Amiens and take the German bridge across the Somme in surprise attack. Montpellier, Beziers, Narbonne and Nice all taken. The U.S. Third Army reaches the river Meuse.

The U.S. Fifth Army crosses the Arno while the Eighth Army attacks the Gothic Line in Italy.

The Soviet 3rd Ukrainian Front captures Bucharest, the capital of Romania and begins to round up members of the 'Fascist' Antonescu government.

Aircraft from a U.S. carrier force (Task Force 38) commence a 3-day attack on Iwo Jima and the Bonin Island in the western Caroline's and Visayas Archipelago, which is the next step to the Philippines.

1945

As U.S. troops release POW's, many reports of systematic degradation are heard. Tokyo is reported as 85% bomb damaged, although this is not as bad as Berlin. Japanese garrison at Marcus Island surrenders to the Americans.

Roll of Honour – August 31

Representing their comrades who died on this day

1915

+DODDS, Private John

Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers. 1st Btn. Private. 6945. Died 31/08/1915 of wounds received in Gallipoli. Born in Lisburn, Co. Down, he enlisted at Belfast. Cairo War Cemetery, Egypt

+WARD, Stephen Henry

RN. Petty Officer. 199275. HMS London. Died 31/08/1915. Age 36. Born Belfast. Husband to Caroline E. Ward, Old Lodge Rd., Belfast. Carnmoney Cemetery. Belfast, Townsend Street - PCI RH

+WRIGHT, John

Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers. 1st Btn. Private. 4429. Died 21/08/1915. Age 20 years old. Son of Mrs. Susan Wright, of

Rosegarland, Magherafelt, Co. Derry. Helles Memorial, Turkey including Gallipoli

1916

+BARKLEY, James

Machine Gun Corps (Infantry), 13th Coy. Private. 36427. Died 31/08/1916. Age 18. Son of Alexander and Sarah Barkley, of 122, Earl St., Belfast. Thiepval Memorial, France

+BONYNGE, S

Royal Dublin Fusiliers, 10th Btn. Private. 25113. Died 31/08/1916. Husband to Susan Bonyngé, of 7, Britannic St., Sandy Row, Belfast. Bully-Grenay Communal Cemetery, British Extension, France

+BURKE, David

Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers. 10th Btn. Private. 15367. Died 31/08/1916. Age 19. Son of Robert and Catherine Burke, of Ballymagroarty, Londonderry. Berks Cemetery Extension, Belgium. Londonderry Diamond WM

+DORMAN, Charles Columbus

RN. AB.SS/3434. HMS Wear. Died 31/08/1916 RN Hospital, Chatham, of disease contracted on board ship. Age 24. Enrolled 29/11/1910 for 5 and 7 years. War service in Pembroke II, Cormorant and Blenheim (Wear). Born Belfast 21/10/1892. Son of James and Margaret Dorman, Aughrim St., Belfast. Gillingham (Woodlands) Cemetery, Kent. Fountainville - PCI RH. IMR. ADM 188/1097/3434

+NELSON, Samuel Wallace

Royal Irish Rifles. 1st Btn. Rifleman. 9076. Died 31/08/1916. Age 20 . Son of Robert and Mary Nelson, of Rory's Glen, Kilwaughter, Larne. Longuenesse (St Omer) Souvenir Cemetery, France

+NORTHCOTE, G

Royal Engineers, 108th Field Coy. Driver. 91280. Died 31/08/1916. Age 31. Husband to Mary Northcote, of 20, Christopher St., Belfast. Salonika (Lembet Road) Military Cemetery, Greece

1917

+DALTON, David

Machine Gun Corps (Infantry). 143rd. Private. 17680. Died of wounds 31/08/1917. Age 25. Born and living in Lurganure, Co. Antrim, he was a gardener by trade and was employed by Sir Thomas Dixon at Hillsborough Castle. He enlisted at Lisburn shortly after the outbreak of war and served in 11 RIR (18941), embarking with them for France from Bordon Camp in October 1915. Invalided back in March 1916 he only returned to the front on the 10/08/1917. Transferred to 143 Company MGC(I) (17680). Born 01/08/1892 to Robert and Maria Jane Dalton, nee McKeown of Lurganure, Maze, Lisburn. In 1901 David was residing with his parents and siblings at 14 Lurganure and in 1911 residing with his widowed mother and siblings at 6 Lurganure. The headstone inscription, which his mother also use for the "In Memoriam" notice she inserted in the Standard on the 29/08/1919, reads, "His richest gift he laid on the alter of life". His brother Private W.J. Dalton served with the North

Lancashire Regiment in India, East Africa and Egypt. He appears to have survived the war. A younger brother worked as an apprentice in the offices of the Lisburn Standard. Lijssenthoek Military Cemetery, Poperinghe, Belgium

1918

+McGONAGLE, John

Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers. Private. 48306. Formerly (2982) Royal Irish Regiment. Died 31/08/1918. Age 43. Husband to Sarah McGonagle, of 3, Epworth St., Londonderry. Cloghcor Roman Catholic Churchyard. Londonderry WM

+McGUIGAN, Samuel

Canadian Infantry, 14th Btn. Corporal. 1054243. Died 31/08/1918 of a gunshot wound at Graylingwell War Hospital, Chichester, England. Age 31. Born Ballyclare 27/02/1888. Enlisted in the Quebec Regiment on 25/08/1916 at Three Rivers, Quebec. He was working at the Wayagamack Pulp and Paper Co, at Three Rivers. His brother Millar McGuigan served with the North Irish Horse and died from phthisis in 1919. Samuel was a member of Young's Temperance True Blues LOL 957. Son of Samuel and Susan (nee Kerr) McGuigan. Born at Ballyclare. Ballyclare New Cemetery. Ballyclare WM. Named on a stained glass window in St Andrew's United Church, Three Rivers, Canada.

+MONTGOMERY, Robert George Donaldson

Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, 2nd Btn. Private. 40655. Formerly (2192) North Irish Horse. Died 31/08/1918. Son of

Robert and Eliza D. Montgomery, of 148, Ormeau Rd.,
Belfast. Bertenacre Military Cemetery, Fletre, Nord, France

+RUSSELL, Robert Campbell

North Staffordshire Regiment, 7th Btn. Lieutenant. MiD.
Died 31/08/1918. Aged 28. Served in and was
commissioned in 1915 in North Irish Horse. He moved to
North Staffordshire Regiment.

“Particulars have now been received of the death,
previously reported, of Lieut. Robert Russell, North Staffs
Regiment, of The Croft, Whitehead, youngest son of the late
Mr. Alfred Russell, The Mount, Belfast.

“Lieut. Russell was on active service in Mesopotamia since
May, 1916, and at the time of his death was in the
Dunsterforce Expedition. He was slightly wounded on the
26th August, and fatally wounded on the 31st August. The
officer commanding his battalion writes:— “He did most
exceptional and gallant work on that day (31st August), and
also on a previous occasion. I had given him a special job to
cover the retirement of another unit in case they were forced
back. He did this so well that the unit had practically no
casualties in the retirement. He was one of the last to leave
the position, and was hit in the body just before coming
away. He was carried in by one of our men. Private — — —,
a long distance, and these two were the actual last to leave.
I saw him in the ambulance on his way to the Russian
hospital train, and had a word or two with him. He died the
same evening in the British hospital in town.” Belfast
Telegraph.

Son of the late Alfred and Sarah Ellen Russell of Whitehead,
Co. Antrim. Baku Memorial, Azerbaijan

1941

+McWHIRTER, James Russell

RAFVR. Squadron Leader (M). 23334. Died 31/08/1941. Born 05/12/1909. son of Rev. James McWhirter, Irish Presbyterian Mission, Kirin, Manchuria. Campbell College. Queen's University. M.B., B.Ch., B.A.O., 1934. Ismailia War Memorial Cemetery, Egypt. QUB WM

1942

+BROWN, Alan

RAFVR. Leading Aircraftman. 1479901. Died 31/08/1942. Aged 19. Son of Mr. and Mrs. Samuel Brown, of Donaghadee, Co. Down. Miami (Grand Army of the Republic) Cemetery

+WILSON, William Ernest

RAFVR. Flight Sergeant (Pilot). 1125341. Died 31/08/1942. Aged 23. 223 Sqdn. Son of David and Anna M. Wilson, of Belfast. El Alamein War Cemetery, Egypt. Knockbreda Parish WM

1943

+GORDON, Samuel John

RAFVR. Pilot Officer (Navigator/Radar Operator). 155089. Died 31/08/1943. Aged 25. 488 (R.N.Z.A.F.) Sqdn. Son of William Freckleton Gordon and Sarah Jane Gordon; husband to Mary Mildred Esther Gordon, of Finaghy, Co. Antrim. Armagh (St.Mark) C of I Churchyard. Seapatricks Parish Church WM, Banbridge

+MACAULAY, Cecil Hill

RAF. 158 Sqdn. Sergeant. 656568. Died 31/08/1943. At 20.20 on 31st August 1943 he was in Halifax II HR738 NP-Z, "Zombie's Zephyr" on a raid to Berlin however the aircraft was shot down by a Night Fighter near Paderborn. Two of the crew, Sergeant Prince and Sergeant Lloyd were able to use their parachutes and became Prisoners of War whilst the four others including Sergeant Macaulay were killed. Son of Robert and Margaret Jane Macaulay, of Islandmagee, Co. Antrim. Hanover War Cemetery, Germany

1944

+CUNNINGHAM, Gordon

Royal Army Service Corps, 173 Armd Div. Coy. Lance Serjeant. T/107753. Died 31/08/1944. Age 27. Attracted to RASC through his interest in engines and vehicles. Had served five years and come through Dunkirk. As he rode a motor cycle, he was shot by a sniper in a French village. Educated at the Armstrong School, Armagh and then worked in Nicholl's garage. Son of Henry and Elizabeth Cunningham, of Gillis, Loughgall Road, Co. Armagh. Conty Communal Cemetery, France. Seapattrick Parish Church WM, Banbridge

+MERRY, Herbert Cecil Bell

RAFVR. Pilot Officer. 183391. Died 31/08/1944. Aged 22. 21 Sqdn. Son of Kenneth Walter and Mary Isobel Merry, of Belfast. Runnymede Memorial, Surrey, Panel 212

+VOKES, Frederick Alexander

British Columbia Dragoons, R.C.A.C. 9th Armd. Regt. Lieutenant Colonel. Mentioned in Despatches. Died in Italy on 31/08/1944 during the Allied advance on the Gothic Line. Age 37. His older brother was Major General Christopher Vokes DSO, also in Canadian forces in Italy. Their father was a major in the Royal Engineers who was for a time stationed in Armagh where he met and married Elizabeth Bryans a prison wardress. They lived at Rokeby Green, Armagh. The family moved to Canada. Son of Frederick Patrick and Elizebeth Vokes; husband to Kathleen Edith Vokes, of Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada. Montecchio War Cemetery, Italy

1945

+McPHAIL, Daniel

REME. Sergeant. 24510. Died 31/08/1945. Age 56. Husband to Sarah McPhail of Greenisland, Co. Antrim. Carnmoney Cemetery, Newtownabbey

VETERANS

CAMPBELL, Sir John

Senior Surgeon, Bristol Red Cross Hospital, Wimereaux. Knight Bachelor, 1925. MP for Queen's University (Parliament of Northern Ireland); MRCS Nov 8th 1888; FRCS June 11th 1891; Winner of the Senior Scholarship in Natural History; MA Royal University of Ireland 1884; MD MCh MAO 1887; LLD Queen's University Belfast 1909. RBAI. He continued his medical education at the London

Hospital, and afterwards visited Paris, Vienna, Munich, Heidelberg, and Bonn. Returning to Belfast he acted for a short time in the place of the Professor of Natural History and was Demonstrator of Anatomy for five years under Peter Redfern (qv). He was appointed Assistant Surgeon to the Belfast Hospital for Sick Children in 1891, Surgeon to the Samaritan Hospital for Women in 1892, and later Assistant to the Belfast Maternity Hospital. From this time he devoted himself entirely to obstetrics and gynaecology, becoming widely known for his clinical ability, skill in organization, and breadth of vision.

Campbell played a prominent part in stimulating the progress of university education in Northern Ireland. He was President of the Royal University Graduates' Association and a Member of the Senate of the University, on the dissolution of which the degree of LL.D. was conferred upon him *honoris causa*. He was afterwards elected Chairman of Convocation of the Queen's University of Belfast, and was President of the Ulster Medical Society in 1902-1903.

At the British Medical Association he was a Member of Council from 1899-1900, one of the Hon Secretaries of the Section of Obstetrics and Gynaecology at the Oxford Meeting in 1904, and President of the section when the Association met at Belfast in 1909. During the First World War he was the Senior Surgeon at No 5 British Red Cross Hospital, Wimereux, which was one of the largest in the conflict. He was one of the four Unionist members representing the Queen's University in the Parliament of Northern Ireland from 1921-1929, when he did not offer himself for re-election. Born Templepatrick 1860. Husband to Emily by whom he had three sons; Lady Campbell and

two sons survived him. He died at Craigavad, Co Down, on 31/08/1929.

CROOKS, Frederick

RAMC. Captain. Cookstown High School. QUB MB 1914, BCh MCh 1914, FRCS Edinburgh. Lieutenant 15/06/1917. Served 1914 - 18. Surgical specialist India from 11/1917. Son of John and Sarah Crooks, Moneyhaw, Co Londonderry. Died 31/08/1950, Nottingham

Every Day is a Remembrance Day

We will remember them

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remembrance ni

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