



remembrance ni



## NI Naval air ace's lead role in sinking three battleships at Taranto

On the night of 11/11/1940, Michael Torrens-Spence DSO DSC DFC (Gr), piloted one of the 21 Swordfish "Stringbag" aircraft from the carrier Illustrious which flew off in two waves to mount one of the most daring naval air raids ever attempted.

Two squadrons of Fleet Air Arm (FAA) torpedo-bombers from the aircraft-carrier HMS Illustrious – Nos 815 and 819 – and two from HMS Eagle – Nos 813 and 824 – attacked the Italian fleet as it lay at anchor in Taranto harbour.

### **Enemy captain - he is mad or he is the bravest man in the world**

Lieutenant Michael Torrens-Spence received the Distinguished Service Cross (DSC) for his part in the raid that night. As part of the second wave, Torrens-Spence made his attack when the defences were fully alert. He flew so low through the harbour entrance that his wheels touched the water at one point. His torpedo was one of three to hit Italia.

Michael Torrens-Spence also received the DSO, second only to the Victoria Cross as a gallantry award, for his courage and leadership during the Battle of Cape Matapan on 28/03/1941. In that battle the British Mediterranean Fleet, under Admiral Sir Andrew Cunningham, defeated the Italian fleet under Admiral Angelo Iachino.

Michael Torrens-Spence was also awarded the Hellenic Distinguished Flying Cross by the Greek government for his services to that country. This included his involvement at Cape Matapan, the battle having been fought to protect supply lines to Greece.

In his book "War in a Stringbag", Charles Lamb observed that because of his "innate nervousness", Torrens-Spence "always forced himself to press home his attacks to a suicidal degree, and the Italian's assessment was no exaggeration".

**Captain  
Michael  
Torrens-  
Spence**



The following month, as CO of 815 Squadron, Torrens-Spence found himself in charge of a small force of

"Stringbags" operating

from an airfield at Paramythia in Albania, attacking Italian shipping to the north. On one occasion he torpedoed and blew up an ammunition ship; on another he attacked and sank what he believed to be a transport but which turned out to be a hospital ship which the Italians had failed to mark and illuminate. No blame was ever attached to Torrens-Spence, but he was forever saddened by the incident.

One evening the men of 815 were amazed to see what appeared to be a Junkers 88 land on their airfield. Seizing revolvers, they raced to the airstrip and leapt on the aircraft as it taxied to a halt. Torrens-Spence arrived first and,



wrenching open the door, ordered the occupants out. One of the three passengers, speaking perfect English, introduced himself: "I'm King Peter of Yugoslavia and that gentleman is my Prime Minister." "And I'm Father Christmas," Torrens-Spence retorted. "Get out!"

But his prisoner indeed turned out to be the young monarch escaping from the invading Germans. Shortly afterwards the Germans found the airfield and attacked it. It was then evacuated.

When writing about 815 Squadron, Charles Lamb observed that "In my opinion 815 was the best squadron of them all, and Tiffy was its finest leader."

Frederick Michael Alexander Torrens-Spence was born on 10/03/1914 at Whiteabbey, Co Antrim. His father was a professional soldier who spent most of the First World War as a PoW. At the age of 13, after attending Mourne Grange School in Kilkeel, young Michael entered Dartmouth Royal Naval College. He began his career on the battleship Valiant and was present at the Invergordon mutiny, later moving to the battleship Warspite, the cruiser Hawkins in the Indian Ocean and the destroyers Elgin and Wilchelsea.

After further training, he volunteered for flying duties with the Fleet Air Arm, then under the command of the RAF. After flying training at Leuchars on First World War Avro 504s, he was commissioned as a pilot in both the RAF and the Navy. His first postings were on the carriers Furious and, in 1937, Glorious.

***A Fairey  
Swordfish  
similar to those  
used by  
Torrens-  
Spence***



When war broke out, Torrens-Spence was playing cricket in Alexandria. Glorious was immediately sent through the Suez Canal to hunt German surface raiders but none was found. He was then sent home from Aden to join the new carrier *Illustrious*.

*Illustrious* entered the Mediterranean in September 1940 and was mainly employed on convoy escorts until the Taranto raid in November. When she was hit by German dive-bombers in early January 1941, Torrens-Spence was one of only three survivors from the wardroom where he had been having lunch.

After his command of No. 815 Squadron, in 1942 he was posted as a test pilot at Boscombe Down and did not return to operational flying until 1945 when he was appointed to the aircraft-carrier *HMS Illustrious* to command its aircraft. The ship was due to join the British Pacific Fleet but the dropping of the atomic bomb and the end of the war meant she never had to be deployed.

He then went to the Empire Test Pilots' School as CO, a job

he did reluctantly as he wanted to get away from flying for a while to get in some sea time. He then served successively in the cruiser Theseus, as Assistant to the 2nd Sea Lord, and as CO of RNAS Eglinton in his native Northern Ireland.

In 1952 he was promoted Captain and sent back to the Admiralty to look after future aircraft requirements. He wrote the staff requirement for the highly successful Buccaneer strike aircraft and steered it through the Admiralty Board.

In 1955 he assumed command of Delight, a Daring class destroyer deploying in home and Mediterranean waters. Afterwards he commanded RNAS Lossiemouth, a training establishment, before taking command in 1959 of the carrier Albion where he spent the next two years, most of it in the Far East.

At 47, Torrens-Spence narrowly missed promotion to Rear Admiral, though he was nominated reserve, and left the Navy. Shortly afterwards, he was invited to become the Commandant of the Ulster Special Constabulary in County Armagh, the so-called "B" Specials.

When the Specials were disbanded in 1970 and replaced by the Ulster Defence Regiment, Torrens-Spence was asked to take command of the County Armagh Battalion (2 UDR), as a lieutenant colonel, to get it up and running. This was not easy as many people had been disheartened by the disbandment of the Specials, but he succeeded in getting enough men and women to volunteer. He retired in 1972.

After the murder by the IRA of the Lord Lieutenant for Co Armagh, Sir Norman Stronge, in January 1981, Torrens-

Spence was invited to become Lord Lieutenant in his place, which he did, albeit with some reluctance, and held the post for seven years.

Torrens-Spence was modest about his achievements. Though he was a passionate unionist, he was never bigoted or closed to new ideas. He was nevertheless saddened by what he saw as continual government appeasement of terrorism.

## **The Fleet Air Arm attack on Italian Fleet at Taranto**

On the night of 11/12 November 1940 the Royal Navy's Fleet Air Arm carried out the first carrier-launched air strike against an enemy fleet.

In 1940, British forces began battling the Italians in North Africa. While the Italians were easily able to supply their troops, the logistical situation for the British proved more difficult as their ships had to traverse almost the entire Mediterranean. Early in the campaign, the British were able to control the sea lanes, however by mid-1940 the tables were beginning to turn, with the Italians outnumbering them in every class of ship except aircraft carriers. Though they possessed superior strength, the Italians were unwilling to fight, preferring to follow a strategy of preserving a "fleet in being."

Concerned that Italian naval strength be reduced before the Germans could aid their ally, Prime Minister Winston Churchill issued orders that action be taken on the issue.

Planning for this type of eventuality had begun as early as 1938, during the Munich Crisis, when Royal Navy leaders first conceived an operation calling for an aerial attack on the Italian fleet base at Taranto. This plan was reactivated in September 1940, when its principal author, Rear Admiral Lumley Lyster, joined Admiral Sir Andrew Cunningham's Mediterranean fleet with the new carrier HMS Illustrious.

Codenamed Operation Judgment, Cunningham and Lyster planned to attack Taranto on October 21, Trafalgar Day, with aircraft from HMS Illustrious and HMS Eagle. This was later changed following fire damage to Illustrious and action damage to Eagle. While Eagle was being repaired, it was decided to press on with the attack using only Illustrious. Several of Eagle's aircraft were transferred to augment Illustrious' air group and the carrier sailed on November 6. In the days before the attack, several reconnaissance flights from Malta confirmed that the Italian fleet was at Taranto.

**Twenty one Swordfish torpedo bombers from the aircraft carrier Illustrious, attacked the Italian navy's battle fleet at anchor in the harbour of Taranto.**

Through a barrage of anti-aircraft fire and balloons, the Royal Navy's Swordfish devastated the Italian fleet.

The torpedo aircraft had to launch their torpedoes from a steady height of 150 feet while travelling at 90 knots in order to cope with the relatively shallow water. This should have made them sitting ducks for the Anti-Aircraft guns of the Battleships and Cruisers that they were attacking, and heavy casualties were anticipated. In fact only two



Swordfish were shot down. Two crew lost their lives and two were captured and taken prisoners by the Italians.

Three battleships were hit by torpedoes, one was sunk and the two others seriously damaged.

Admiral Cunningham, Commander in Chief of the Mediterranean fleet said the attack "...had changed the face of naval warfare for ever".

The success of the attack marked the beginning of the rise of naval aviation, over the big guns of battleships and inspired the Japanese attack on the American Fleet at Pearl Harbour.

**Lieutenant M.R. Maund describes the reality for the men in the open cockpits of the venerable old Swordfish aircraft:**

"Six thousand feet. God how cold it is here! The sort of cold that fills you until all else is drowned, save perhaps fear and loneliness. Suspended between heaven and earth in a sort of no-man's land – to be sure, no man was ever meant to be here Is it surprising that my knees are knocking together?

"We have now passed under a sheet of alto-stratus cloud which blankets the moon, allowing only a few pools of silver where small gaps appear. And, begob, Williamson is going to climb through it! As the rusty edge is reached I feel a tugging at my port wing, and find that Kemp has edged me over into the slipstream of the leading sub-flight.



“I fight with hard right stick to keep the wing up, but the sub-flight has run into one of its clawing moments, and quite suddenly the wing and nose drop\_ and we are falling out of the sky! I let her have her head and see the shape of another aircraft flash by close over-head.

“Turning, I see formation lights ahead and climb up after them, following them through one of the rare holes in this cloud mass. There are two aircraft sure enough, yet when I

range up alongside, the moon-glow shows up the figure 5A — that is Olly. The others must be ahead.

“After an anxious few minutes some dim lights appear amongst the upper billows of the cloud, and opening the throttle we lumber away from Olly after them. Poor old engine — she will get a tanning this trip...

...“We are now at 1,000 feet over a neat residential quarter of the town where gardens in darkened squares show at the back of houses marshalled by the neat plan of the streets that serve them. Here is the main road that connects the district with the main town. We follow its line and, as I open the throttle to elongate the glide, a Breda AA gun swings round from the shore, turning its stream of red balls in our direction.

“This is the beginning. Then another two guns farther north get our scent — white balls this time — so we throttle back again and make for a black mass on the shore that looks like a factory, where no balloons are likely to grow. We must be at a hundred feet now and must soon make our dash across that bloody water ...

“I open the throttle wide and head for the mouth of the Mar Piccolo, whose position ... can be judged by the lie of the land. Then it is as if all hell comes tumbling in on top of us ... the fire of one of the cruisers and the Mar Piccolo Canal batteries ...

“We turn until the right hand battleship is between the bars of the torpedo sight, dropping down as we do so. The water is close beneath our wheels, so close I am wondering which is to happen first — the torpedo going or our hitting the sea

— then we level out, and almost without thought the button is pressed and a jerk tells me the ‘fish’ is gone.

This account, and many others, appears in [Swordfish: The Story of the Taranto Raid](#). In this new account of the Royal Navy's most daring operation of the Second World War, David Wragg draws on British and Italian records as well as interviews with the aircrew, to tell the full story of a night that changed the course of the war.

Major Oliver Patch RM was awarded the DSC in December 1940 'for outstanding courage and skill in a brilliant and wholly successful night attack by the Fleet Air Arm on the Italian Fleet at Taranto.'

**Acknowledgments** - Fleet Air Museum, World War II Today

## On this Day – November 12

### 1938

The German government found Jews collectively responsible for Kristallnacht.

### 1939

Negotiations between Russia and Finland over territorial dispute reach deadlock.

### 1940

Soviet Foreign Minister Molotov visited Berlin for talks on the continued Nazi-Soviet pact. German Foreign Minister





Ribbentrop stated that the end had arrived for the British empire. Later on, the meeting was interrupted with an air raid by the RAF.

Germany prepares to enter war in Greece.

Colonel Burns again proposes a Canadian parachute force to the Chief of General Staff. The idea is shelved, and no action is taken.

## **1942**

The British 8th Army retakes Sollum and Bardia, while Panzer Army Afrika continues its withdrawal toward Tripoli.

U.S. Navy battles Tokyo Express off Guadalcanal.

US Ninth AF formed in Egypt under Lt. Gen. Lewis Brereton.

Morocco and Algeria are in Allied hands (770 Americans and 240 British were killed in Torch landings).

Kaiser Shipyards in Richmond, CA launches Liberty Ship Robert E. Peary four days after the keel is laid, a wartime record.

## 1943

US President Roosevelt embarks on USS Iowa to go to the Allied conferences at Teheran and Cairo.

German troops invade Leros by sea and drop 500 paratroops.

The Russians take Zhitomir in Ukraine. The Kiev bridgehead is now 95 miles deep and 150 miles wide.

Japanese bomb Parap, Adelaide River, and Batchelor Airfield in last air attack on Australia.

French proclaim martial law in Lebanon after Lebanese amend constitution to end French mandate (on Nov. 8).

## 1944



RAF launches 29 Avro Lancaster bombers that sink German battleship Tirpitz, heaviest ship ever built by a European navy, with 12,000lb Tallboy bombs. Tirpitz, sister ship of the



Bismarck, was lying at anchor in a fjord near Tromsø in northern Norway. Two direct hits and a near miss cause the ship to capsize rapidly. 950 to 1,204 trapped in her capsized hull are lost.

**1945**

The institute of France awards Churchill a gold medal.

# Roll of Honour – November 12

*Representing their comrades who died on this day*

## FEET AIR ARM - WORLD WAR II

The following from N Ireland served

### **ADDY, David Cyril Baines**

RN. FAA. B 22/02/1926. D 05/02/1991. Son of JV Addy, Knock Rd., Belfast. Campbell College 2900. RBAI.

### **ANDERSON, RB**

HMS Caroline. RNVR. Lieutenant - Commander. Appointed Assistant Defence Officer for West Solent and Isle of Wight, September 1939. July 1945 appointed First Lieutenant HMS Mayina, Ceylon. Later Officer i/c Fleet Air Arm at Trincomalee.

### **BABINGTON, Robert**

RNAS/ FAA. Sub Lieutenant. Pilot. 1939-45. During the course of the war he had at least two near death experiences. His first wartime posting was flying Fairy Fulmars from the Harland and Wolff-built carrier HMS Formidable. He arrived in Egypt just as his ship was about to take part in the evacuation of Crete. After the Crete evacuation he flew Swordfish torpedo bombers during the invasion of Syria and once spent three days in a dingy, without food or water, after being forced to ditch at sea.



Robert was awarded a DSC. The citation reads: "The Distinguished Service Cross has been awarded to Sub Lieutenant Babington for his skill, bravery and sustained resolution in many air attacks against enemy submarines and E-boats in the Mediterranean." He had another brush with death when the carrier HMS Dasher was sunk on 27<sup>th</sup> March 1943 while sailing in the Clyde with the loss of 379 men. As the ship was sinking, he was forced to jump overboard and swim to safety. A massive explosion took the ship under a short time later. Dublin born. St Columba's College and Trinity College, Dublin. Called to the Northern Ireland Bar 1947. Queen's Counsel 1965. An Ulster Unionist member. He resigned from the '66 Committee of Unionist backbenchers in October 1970. Sat for North Down from the 1969 general election until the prorogation of the Parliament in 1972. County Court Judge for Fermanagh and Tyrone from 1974.

**+BAYNE, Alan Miller Cameron**

RN. Petty Officer Airman. FAA, 754 Squadron. Died 17/02/1943. Age 23. FAA 754 Squadron was based at HMS Condor, a Royal Naval Air Station, at Arbroath. Died in an air crash while in service. Son of William James Bayne, and Mrs. Selina Bayne, Tinwald, Canterbury, New Zealand, and formerly of Tamlaghtmore, Moneymore. Buried in Cookstown New Cemetery. First Cookstown PCI - RH. Cookstown WM.

**+BOAL, William James**

RNVR. FAA. Prob T/ Sub-Lieut (A). DCM. 755 Squadron based at HMS Kestrel, Worthy Down, Winchester. Died 01/07/1941. Age 47. Whilst serving as a pilot instructor there was a collision with another plane. Served in the ranks of

9th Battalion, Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers as a signaller in World War 1. DCM 01/01/1919, St Quentin, France. Son of Robert and Jane Boal. Robert Boal, also army, served in Gibraltar, Egypt, Malta, South Africa, WW1. Husband to Margaret Boal, Tobermore. Family memorial St Columba's Church of Ireland graveyard, Draperstown.

### **BROWN, William**

RN. FAA. Commissioned 1940. He flew Walrus seaplanes from bases in N Africa and Scotland. Seconded to 836 Naval Air Squadron at Maydown on the Foyle estuary. Its remit was to monitor U-boat activity in the N atlantic. He and his squadron flew Fairey Swordfish biplanes from converted merchant vessels known as MAC Ships (Merchant aircraft carriers) that accompanied vessels across the Atlantic.

Bill developed a passion for mathematics and post-war completed a PhD in mathematics at the University of Michigan and subsequently lectured in the USA and Canada. He returned to Portaferry in 1958 and became involved in the family business.

His passion for sailing resulted in him designing a new 35ft racing yacht 'Ruffian'. He and his brother founded Westerley Yachts and over 200 fibreglass yachts were produced in their two factories in the 1970's and 80's.

Bill returned to teaching mathematics at Sullivan Upper and then the Open University.

He and his wife had a strong involvement with the RNLI Portaferry Station. Bill served as Hon. Secretary to the Station for 12 years and was awarded the RNLI's Gold

Badge in 2005. Born Portaferry 24/04/1921 - Died 08/03/2006. RBAI. University of Michigan

### **CAPPER, Adam Clarke**

FAA. 1939-45. B 14/09/1926. Son of T. H. Capper, 56 Malone Park, Belfast. Campbell College 2903. BA, OU. Civil servant Rtd. Killinchy.

### **CLENDINNING, Henry George**

RN. FAA. Lieutenant Commander (A). 386306. The War interrupted his studies in civil engineering at QUB. He volunteered to join the Fleet Air Arm. He was sent to Kingston, Ontario to train as a pilot. He flew a variety of single and twin engined aeroplanes in his career, sometimes off aircraft carriers. Later in the war he was chosen to be Lady Mountbatten's pilot on a number of occasions. From RNVR to be Lieutenant from 01/09/1947 with seniority from 05/03/1943 (London Gazette 27/01/1948). Post-war on the death of his father he returned to run the family business of Clendinning Bros Richhill until his retirement in 1982. He continued to fly with the Scottish Air Division until 1957. Harry had flown with the Squadron to Malta where Joan was working for four years as a Radar Wren in air traffic control. They married in Scotland before returning to set up home at Mahon House in Portadown. Harry had a fruitful career as a pilot and featured in the book Hurricane's Men, flying in Canada and Europe, and taking part in the Queen's Coronation where he flew in formation over Windsor. He played rugby for Portadown College and was a member of the town's first fifteen rugby squad. Harry continued to sail twice a week at Lough Neagh Sailing Club where he was a founder member and three times past Commodore. In Tarbet Harry was runner-up in his Rover series class in

1995 and was class winner and points winner in West Highland Week in 1996. He was delighted to receive the prize for oldest skipper and collected this award at many regattas. He was a Rectors Church Warden both in St Mark's Portadown and St Mark's Armagh. Vice President of the British Legion and in the years before his death took the salute at Remembrance Day parades in Armagh and at the Sixtieth Anniversary Parade in Tandragee. High Sheriff for County Armagh. B Richill. D February 2008. Portadown College. BSc QUB 1940

### **DARLING, Gerald Ralph Auchinleck**

RNVR. FAA. Lieutenant-Commander. At the age of 18 he began an outstanding career in the RNVR, from 1940 to 1946, as a Fleet Air Arm pilot, later becoming Chief Test Pilot with the Mediterranean Fleet. A dangerous job and few of his colleagues survived the war. He himself crash-landed, suffering severe injuries including a smashed pelvis. The prognosis was that he would never walk again but following the Greek motto on his aircraft, meaning "Know Thyself", he characteristically defied all the odds, learning to ride again both horse and bicycle. He maintained his connection with the Navy through the RNVR, rising to the rank of Lieutenant-Commander.

Born 1921 in Erganagh Rectory where his grandfather Gerald was rector, he maintained his Northern Ireland connections throughout his life. Academically he was a high flyer. His first school was Omagh, then a scholarship to Harrow, and a classics scholarship to Hereford College, Oxford.



On the death of his father in 1958 he had inherited Crevenagh House, near Omagh, where, from his schooldays, he had spent many happy holidays with his extended family. He was proud of his descent from the Auchinleck family who had always lived there, and resolved to maintain it as a family home despite his ties to life in London. In his London office you would find a Donegal landscape and a map showing the wartime achievements of Ulster.

In 1990 he became Deputy Lieutenant of Co Tyrone and in 1993 High Sheriff. In his obsequies address Bishop Hannon of Clogher paid tribute to Gerald Darling's contribution to the work of Edenderry parish, where he had served as parish secretary. In the townlands of Omagh his roots went deep. Bishop Hannon related how, before a major court appearance, Darling would ease the tension by thinking of his favourite spots on the river, the snipe bogs and mountains of Tyrone. Strangely, after a lifetime of trout-fishing, he caught his first salmon only a year before his death. One of his family remembers the fishing picnics in childhood - "as unfortunately a mizzly day is good for fishing the picnics were often rather damp affairs".

But that was balanced by the warmth of bedtime stories in the family flat in the Middle Temple where it is said the family, willy-nilly, added to the appreciative audience for Darling's dramatic readings of Winnie the Pooh. He would, friends say, have been equally at home as a farmer, taking great pride in his forestry and Belted Galloway cattle and never more at home than working in ragged jeans with his chainsaw.

A permanent record of Gerald Darling and his distinction as a lawyer will be his contribution to that definitive work, Halsbury's Laws of England (Admiralty and Ship Collisions), the third edition of 1952. In 1992 he was made an Honorary Bencher of the Northern Ireland Bar.

Gerald Ralph Auchinleck Darling, barrister-at-law: born Erganagh, Co Tyrone 8 December 1921; called to the Bar, Middle Temple 1950, Bencher 1972, Treasurer 1991; Barrister, Northern Ireland 1957, Honorary Bencher 1992; RD 1967; QC 1967; member, Panel of Lloyd's Arbitrators in Salvage Cases 1967-78, Appeal Arbitrator 1978-91; member, Panel of Wreck Commissioners 1967-96; QC, Hong Kong 1968; Judge, Admiralty Court of the Cinque Ports 1979-96; trustee, Royal Naval Museum 1985-90; Lloyd's Silver Medal 1991; married 1954 Susan Hobbs (one son, one daughter); died Londonderry 13 September 1996.

### **ERSKINE, Colin Jack**

RN. Naval Airman. b. 29/05/1925. Son of J. Erskine, Greenisland. Campbell College 2681

### **ERVIN, Wilson**

RN. FAA. CBE. Petty Officer. Radar. Served 4 years. HMS Illustrious. Served in home waters as well as South Africa, the Far East, Ceylon, Burma and Australia. His 21st birthday was spent in the Indian Ocean. Served in Pacific, kamikaze attacks. Off Burma when war ended. Attended Stramillis and Fane Street Primary Schools, RBAI. Joined the Belfast Banking Company on 15/04/1942 at Dungannon branch. He returned from active service on 22/08/1946. Post-war career in banking, from clerk to chief executive and managing director of Northern Bank in Ireland. He

attended the 2000 re-dedication ceremony of the Bank's Rolls of Honour. Governor of RBAI, Vice President of RNLI, RUAS. Trustee of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland and elder of Fisherwick Church from where his funeral took place 25/02/2015. Aged 91. Son of Robert John Ervin, Lucerne Parade, Belfast. Husband to Joan who predeceased him.

### **FERGUSON, Robert**

RN. FAA. Bob left the family farm in Fermanagh to join the Royal Navy in 1943. As soon as he was old enough he applied to join the Fleet Air Arm as a pilot. He trained in Canada and spent the last few months of the war flying fighter aircraft from carriers in the Pacific. After the war he took a degree in geology at Trinity College, Dublin and worked for several years on the copper mines of Northern Rhodesia. He became interested in a career in medicine and saved enough money to put himself through medical school. After graduating from Queen's University, Belfast, he worked at Belfast City Hospital and at the South Tyrone Hospital in Dungannon. He then moved to Boston, USA, where he served on the staff of the Veterans Administration Hospital and later the Northeastern University Student Health Service. He died 10/02/2010 at Wellesley, Massachusetts. USA, survived by his wife Betty.

### **+GLOVER, Harold Aloysius**

RN. Petty Officer Airman. FAA/FX. 80001. Died 01/01/1941 Age: 23. HMS Formidable. Husband of Eileen May Glover, Portrush. St Helens Cemetery, Lancashire. Lee-on-Solent Memorial, Bay 2

**+HAMILTON, Samuel Frederick**

RN. FAA. Leading Air Mechanic. FAA/FX 76837. Died 29/01/1943. Age: 27. HMS Cormorant, RNAS Station, Gibraltar. Died in N Africa. Son of William John Frederick and Sarah Hamilton, Omagh. Bone War Cemetery. Annaba

**+JACKSON, George Balfour Sydney**

RN. FAA. Leading Airman, FAA/FX 80569. Assigned to HMS Daedalus (FAA base at Lee-on-Solent). Died 17/01/1941. Age 19. He was a passenger on steam passenger ship Almeda Star lost on passage to Trinidad. The ship was sunk with the loss of all crew and passengers by U-Boat 96. Son of Sydney Herbert and Marjorie Sinclair Jackson, Belfast. Lee-on-Solent Memorial, Hampshire. St Jude's Parish Church, Belfast WM

**McDERMOTT, Robert**

RNR. Pilot. Flew the Seafire, the naval version of the Spitfire. Served in Canada, USA, Africa and Sri Lanka (Ceylon) where he commanded 742 Squadron and was the Admiral's personal pilot. Married Third Officer Gill Oppenheimer, WRNS, in Columbo, Ceylon, on 10/03/1945. Gill also served at Bletchley Park where the Enigma code was broken. Churchill later commented how successfully the WRNS had kept secret the work of Station X. Robert was keen to stay in the navy but familial duty brought him home to run their shirt and collar making business in Bridge St., Coleraine.

**MONARD, Patrick Terence**

RNVR. FAA. Petty Officer. 1939 - 45. B20/11/1924. Son of SH Monard, The Warren, Donaghadee. Campbell College 2842



**SCOTT, Bobby**

RNAS. Aircraft mechanic. Enlisted 1943, aged 18. To USA on Queen Elizabeth. Transferred to USS Albemarle, a seaplane repair ship.

**+SQUIRES, Francis William**

RNVR. Lieutenant (A), 854 Squadron. HMS Illustrious. Died 27/03/1945. Aged 29. Launching attacks on airfields in Sakishima, Gunto. Pacific, from HM Aircraft Carriers Indomitable, Indefatigable and Victorious covered by major units of BPF and with screen of Fleet destroyers. Joint operations with US Task Group in continuation with breaks for refuelling from British Fleet Train. Son of Francis William and Florence Evelyn Squires; husband to Margaret Jane Squires, Limavady. B.Sc. (Eng.) Hons. Lee-on-Solent Memorial, Bay 6

**+SURGEONER, William John**

RN. FAA. Air Mechanic (1st Class). FX/110964. Died 04/03/1945. Age 20. HMS Malagas, Wingfield, Cape Town, South Africa. Simon's Town (Dido Valley) Cemetery. Son of John and Jeannie Surgeoner, Ballymena. Ballymena WM

**TORRENS - SPENCE, Frederick Michael Alexander**

RNAS/FAA. Captain. DSO, DFC, AFC and Greek DFC. B Whiteabbey, County Antrim 10/03/1914. Mourne Grange School, at the age of 13 he attended Dartmouth RNC. Husband to Rachel. One of their sons Brigadier Edward John (Johnny) Torrens-Spence CBE, was British Embassy military attaché to the United States. D 12/12/2001, Laurelvale House, Laurelvale. See above

## WORLD WARS

**1914**

**+McGUINNESS, Daniel**

Royal Irish Fusiliers, 7th Btn. Private. 16352. Died 12/11/1914 from gastritis and cardiac failure. Age 57. Born in Portadown. He lived with his wife and daughter in Whiteabbey, enlisting in Belfast. Husband to Mrs. McGuinness, of 7, Shamrock Terrace, Whiteabbey. St Michael's New Cemetery, Tipperary

**1916**

**+MAULTSAID, Wesley**

Royal Irish Rifles. 11th Btn. Second Lieutenant. Died 12/11/1916. Age 28. Son of W. J. Maultsaid, of Londonderry. Sanctuary Wood Cemetery, Belgium. Londonderry Diamond WM

**1917**

**+DONNELLY, Francis**

Royal Munster Fusiliers, 2nd Btn. Private. 6970. Died 12/11/1917. Born in Draperstown, County Londonderry. He enlisted in Omagh, Co. Tyrone. After training he went to France on 18/12/1915. He had previously been with the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers and Army Cyclist Corps. He died of gunshot wounds, which fractured his right thigh, at No 3 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station. Lijssenthoek Military Cemetery, West-Vlaanderen, Belgium

### **+HEGAN, James**

Canadian Infantry, 7th Btn. Private. 437103. Died 12/11/1917. He was severely wounded by a shell. He died two days later. Age 22. Born Cookstown 26/03/1895. Son of William John and Mary Hegan. His father was a farmer and they lived in Ballysudden, Tullyhogue. James Hegan emigrated to Canada where he worked as a farmer. He enlisted in Edmonton when he was 20 years old. Dozinghem Military Cemetery, Poperinghe, West-Vlaanderen, Belgium. Sandholes PCI RH

### **+SCOTT, David Harden**

Royal Flying Corps, 65th Squadron. Lieutenant. MC. Died 12/11/1917. Age 21. Educated at Bangor Grammar School. On 08/09/1914 he joined the QUB Training Corps.

Prior to the outbreak of the Great War he was employed by the County Down Weaving Co Ltd which he entered from the Trade Preparatory School of the Municipal Technical Institute.

Harden Scott joined the Army in October 1914 and shortly afterward received his commission in the 16th Battalion, Royal Irish Rifles (County Down Pioneers). For a time he served with the Army Cyclist Corps before being transferred to the Royal Flying Corps. Lieutenant Scott was awarded the Military Cross on 28/08/1916 and the citation stated that, along with Second Lieutenant Herbert H Turk as pilot, he attacked seven hostile machines flying in formation and brought down one as a wreck. When turning to engage another machine the rudder controls were shot away and his machine went into a spinning nose-dive. After falling 5,000 feet the pilot partially regained control and, although the machine kept on turning, he managed to land safely.

Lieutenant Scott was injured and required a lengthy period of convalescence; Second Lieutenant Turk was subsequently killed in action on 03/11/1916.

Harden received his Military Cross from the King on 29/08/1917 and on 27/10/1917 he returned to France as a scout pilot. Two weeks later, on 12/11/1917, he was killed in action whilst on patrol over the German lines. His machine was brought down by a direct hit from an enemy anti-aircraft gun. Major Cunningham described it as 'cruel luck for it is only once in many thousand or even a million times that a direct hit is obtained'.

Memorial services were held in four Ballynahinch churches – Presbyterian, Church of Ireland, Congregational and Methodist. Harden Scott presented a gold medal to Ballynahinch Boy Scout Troop to be used as a competition trophy. Born on 24/11/1895 in Abbey Street, Bangor and he was the eldest son of Matthew and Elizabeth Craig Scott (nee Lemon). Matthew Scott was the railway station-master in Bangor. At the time of Harden's death, the Scott family was living at 43 Railway Street, Ballynahinch where Matthew Scott was the station-master. Pont du Hem Military Cemetery, La Gorgue Nord France. Lieutenant David Harden Scott is commemorated in Bangor Masonic Lodge No. 746 and as J H Scott in both First Bangor Presbyterian Church WM and Bangor Grammar School WM.

### **+THOMPSON, William**

Royal Garrison Artillery, 237th Siege Bty. Gunner. 281545. Died 12/11/1917. Husband to Mary Thompson, of Killymoon St., Cookstown. Noeux-Les-Mines Communal Cemetery Extension, Pas de Calais, France. Cookstown WM.

## **1918**

### **+GILLESPIE, Frederick Joseph**

South African Medical Corps. 1st Field Ambulance. Acting Sergeant. 86. Died of wounds at 58 Casualty Clearing Station 12/11/1918. He was wounded whilst attending the wounded in action. Born 30/12/1880 in Enniskillen, Co. Fermanagh to Joseph Scott and Mary Ann Gillespie, nee Rogers of Annahilt, Hillsborough later of of Garney, Sligo, Ireland. Tincourt New British Cemetery, France.

### **+JOHNSTON, J**

Royal Irish Fusiliers, 9th (North Irish Horse) Btn. Lance Corporal. 71507. Died 12/11/1918. Age 21 years old. Son of John Henry and Rebecca Johnston, of Croughrim, Florence Court, Enniskillen. Caudry British Cemetery, France

### **+MAYES, Charles**

RN. ERA III. M17317. HMS Opal. Died 12/11/1918. Enrolled 01/12/1915 for hostilities. Victory and Diligence (Opal 29/03/1916 - 12/01/1918). Born Belfast 08/11/1890. ADM 188/1052/17317

### **+McCULLOUGH, Thomas**

Canadian Infantry. 24th Btn. Lance corporal. 65683. Died 12/11/1918. Age 21. Emigrated to Canada. Received severe gunshot wounds in France and was evacuated to England where he died in Queen's Canadian Hospital in Shornecliffe. Son of Thomas James and Susan McCullough, Tullyallen House, Mountnorris. Mountnorris Presbyterian Churchyard and Mountnorris Church WM



**+McKENNA, John**

RNAS. CI. F36250. Died 12/11/1918 at RNAS Oldbury.  
Enrolled 25/08/1917 for hostilities. President II (Crystal  
Palace and Icarus), Pembroke II, and President II(Oldbury).  
Formerly RNVR Y21783. Born Belfast 15/04/1894. ADM  
188/628/36250

**+REID, Alexander**

Royal Army Service Corps. M.T. Depot (Grove Park).  
Private. M/344918. Died 12/11/1918. Age 19. Son of John  
and Maggie Reid, of 27, Springwell St., Ballymena.  
Ballymena New Cemetery. The neighbouring grave is that of  
Constable Robert Reid who was serving with the Royal  
Ulster Constabulary and was at Glenravel Street Station  
when it was bombed by the Luftwaffe during the Belfast Blitz  
on the night of 05/05/1941. Robert was 22 years old, the  
Son of William John Reid from Springwell Street,  
Ballymena.

**1942**

**+AMOS, Walter Francis**

RAF. Flying Officer. 46707 . Died 12/11/1942. Age 27. 235  
Sqn. Son of William George and Lily Amos; Husband to  
Mary E. Amos, Belfast. Helston Cemetery, United Kingdom

**+LEWIS, Charles Albert**

RN. Able Seaman. D/JX 208594. Date of Death:12/11/1942.  
Age: 30. H.M.S. Hecla. Son of Edith Lewis; husband to  
Elizabeth Lewis, Newry. Plymouth Naval Memorial, Panel 65

### **+THORNTON, Wilson**

HMS Caroline. RNVR. AB. P/UD/X 697. Died 12/11/1942. Age 31. HMS Marne. Member of HMS Caroline's soccer team. Previously employed at Wm Ewart's, Crumlin Rd., Belfast. Son of Alexander Thornton, and of Annie Thornton, Belfast. (Belfast Weekly Telegraph 27/11/1942). Portsmouth Naval Memorial, Panel 71.

### **+VEIGHEY, William**

RN. AB. D/JX 253780. Died 12/11/1942. HMS Hecla. Reported missing after ship sank in operations off North African coast. Two years' service. Son of Mrs C Veighey, Hutchinson St., Belfast. (Belfast Weekly Telegraph 12/02/1943). Plymouth Naval Memorial, Panel 66

## **1943**

### **+GIBSON, Robert Trevor**

RAFVR. Sergeant. 1036711. Died 12/11/1943. Aged 21. He was Flight Engineer on Handley Page Halifax BB326 with No. 1659 Heavy Conversion Unit. He died when the plane came down in the village of Bobbington shortly after taking off from RAF Halfpenny Green, Worcestershire at 1315hrs. Five others died in the incident, one survived. The impact threw Pilot Officer TM Murdock (J27606) clear of the burning wreckage and he was the only survivor. Formerly resident at 171 University St., Belfast. Belfast City Cemetery, Glenalina.

### **+KANE, Francis Benedict**

Royal Irish Fusiliers. 2nd Btn. Fusilier. 6979036. Died between 12/11/1943 and 16/11/1943. Age 28. Son of Michael Kane and of Annie Kane, of Belfast. Leros War Cemetery, Greece

**+MAXWELL, Roderick Leighton Potter**

Wiltshire Regiment seconded to the King's Own Royal Regiment (Lancaster). Captain. 103030. Died between 12/11/1943 and 16/11/1943. Age 31. Son of Harry and Edith Mary Maxwell, of Lurgan. Leros War Cemetery, Greece

**1944**

**+BLAIR, James**

Royal Ulster Rifles, London Irish Rifles, 2nd Btn. Rifleman. 7019574. Died 21/10/1944. Aged 21. Son of Samuel and Elizabeth Blair, of Larne. Santerno Valley War Cemetery, Italy

**+WARDEN, Robert Rank**

Royal Ulster Rifles, London Irish Rifles, 2nd Btn. Rifleman. 7046535. Died 12/11/1944. Age 22. Robert was the youngest child of John and the late Sarah Warden of 70 Greenwell St., Newtownards. He had two brothers, David and John, and three sisters, Eleanor, Minnie and Maggie. Arezzo War Cemetery, Italy. Newtownards PCI RH

**1945**

**+MARTIN, Ronald Victor Joseph**

Royal Corps of Signals. 1 Radio Security Coy. Signalman. 2602715. Died 12/11/1945. Age 20. Son of William and Florence Martin, of Bangor, Co. Down. Rangoon Memorial, Myanmar

**VETERANS**

## **BACON, Mark**

Gunner, Royal Naval Reserve. He volunteered for active service in the Winter of 1915 (aged about 24 years), and ships served on included H.M.S. Albemarle, a battle cruiser. Before the War he was a fisherman. Mark was the son of Robert and Margaret Bacon (nee Reynolds ) and was born on 23/09/1890 at Agherton Portstewart. His mother died on 14/10/1895 and his stepmother Lizzie Bacon (nee Fleming) took over raising his 3 siblings and her own son and daughter to Robert. His father, Robert (fisherman), and step-mother, Lizzie, lived at Teresa Terrace (Heathmount), Portstewart. Mark was living at Upper Heathmount. He died on 12/11/1959 and his remains were interred in Agherton Cemetery. He is commemorated on the Roll of Honour in Agherton Parish Church.

## **BOOTH, John Robert A**

RN. BA 1930 QUB. MCB. Born 12/11/1908. Son of Dr John Booth, Cork. Methodist Publishing House, then Civil Service. Belfast

## **CAMPBELL, William Kealty**

RAMC. Brigadier. DSO. MBE. MC and Bar. MiD twice. QUB MB 1915. Lieutenant RAMC 08/08/1914. Captain 07/08/1915. Major 31/07/1941. Brigadier 29/11/1942. In France from 05/05/1915 - 1919 with 28 Field Ambulance. DSO (22/09/1916) for services at Longuval on 14/07/1916. Post war served in India, China, Malaya and Egypt. Born 12/11/1889

## **PATTON, William Francis**

Royal Irish Rifles. Second Lieutenant. CBE. QC. Born 12/11/1897 Educated at RBAI. He joined QUB Training Corps in October 1914 and left in January 1916 when he enlisted in the 20th Battalion, Royal Irish Rifles. In October 1917, he was attached to the 1st King George's Own Gurkha Rifles (The Maluan Regiment), an appointment which he relinquished on 20/04/1919. He served in India and the Middle East and was reported "missing and presumed killed on 10/04/1918". However, on April 24, the Northern Whig reported that William Francis Patton had been taken prisoner. After the war he pursued a career in the legal profession, becoming a Queen's Counsellor. CBE, 1974, for his service to the legal system in Northern Ireland.

## **SCOTT, George Albert**

RNVR. Surgeon - Commander. WW2. MB BCh BAO(1934) MD(1946) MRCP(1949) FRCP(1971)

George Scott was born at Clover Hill, County Cavan. His father was Richard William Scott, merchant and farmer. His mother, Elizabeth Matilda, was the daughter of William Crawford, also a farmer. When George was still a boy the family were driven from their home by the disturbance of the Irish rebellion.

George was educated at Coleraine Academical Institution and Queen's University, Belfast. Immediately after qualifying he went into general practice in Preston. In 1941 he gave up his practice and joined the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve, reaching the rank of surgeon commander, and at the end of the war returned to Belfast for postgraduate study. He was



appointed physician, the first such appointment, to the Moyle Hospital, Larne, in 1950; it was one of the early fruits of the National Health Service.

It is probable that the relatively small population of East Antrim did not give George all the opportunities of which his intellectual vigour could have made so much. Nevertheless, it was he who brought the specialty of internal medicine to East Antrim, and by his work and example transformed practice there to the benefit of its people. For many years he had no assistance other than a house physician, and he was on duty 24 hours a day except when he was on annual leave. He brought to light the silicosis of flint crushers in the area (which ran a rapid course to death), and the pneumoconiosis of bauxite crushers.

He was founder chairman of the Ulster Society of Internal Medicine and it was due to his friendly, sensible and commanding personality that the Society was a success from the beginning. He served in the RAMC Emergency Reserve, being lieutenant colonel in charge of the medical division or 4th General Hospital. He was president of the Larne branch of the British Legion, first chairman of the local branch of the British Empire Cancer Campaign, and an active worker for the Boys' Club.

The rocks of Antrim have long interested geologists, and George became a competent amateur geologist. In his youth he played rugby for his school, University and Ulster - and later played in Preston. He rowed on the River Bann at Coleraine and, later, at Queen's, where he also played the Scottish pipes in the OTC band. In his later years, fishing, golf, bridge and bowls gave him some recreation. After

retirement, he cared for his garden and also revealed a remarkable gift for modelling in pottery.

George was a cheerful, kind friend and colleague, of a most firm and upright character, an enlightened physician, a good citizen and a true Ulsterman. In 1936 he married Zillah Elizabeth Todd and they had two sons. Zillah, who survived him, was the constant support of his life and work for nearly fifty happy years. One son, George, became an architect who designed surgery buildings for general practices; the other, Liam, entered general practice in Holywood, County Down. Born 06/06/1911. Died 21/10/1985

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***We will remember them***

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## 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 [houston.mckelvey@btinternet.com](mailto:houston.mckelvey@btinternet.com)

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