



remembrance ni

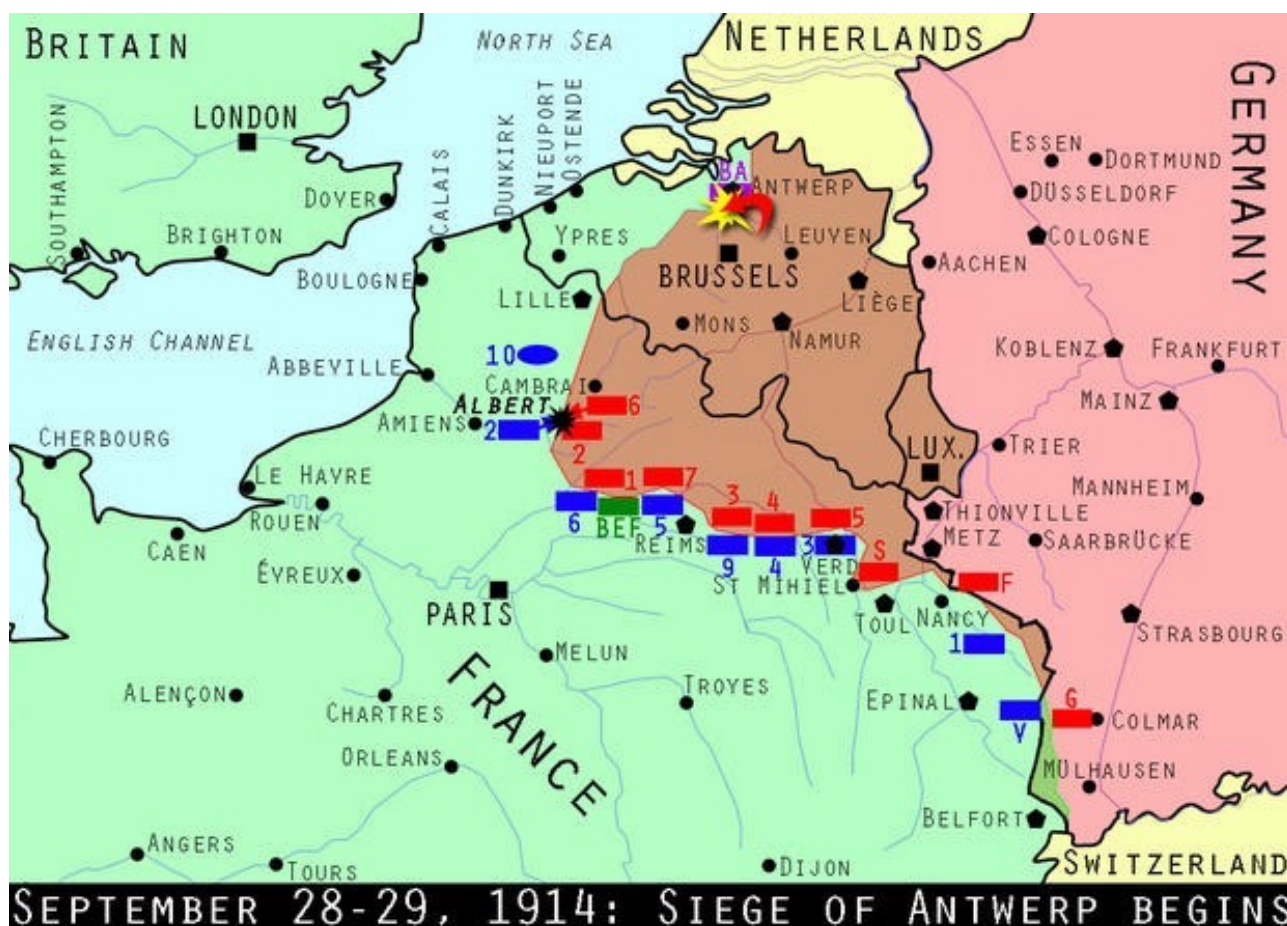
Pioneer of naval aviation Lord Annesley RN fought in air and on land

The young Lord Annesley of Castlewellan saw the horrors of the land war at first hand in the early months of the First World War. Within a few weeks he was to become Northern Ireland's first naval aviator fatality.



Following battles near Ypres and Mons the allies were forced to retreat and defend Antwerp. Lord Annesley's letters home provide a first hand account of the horrendous conditions faced.

From the outbreak of hostilities the Royal Navy was involved in the land war in Europe. Naval personnel served in the



trenches mainly in the Royal Naval Division and the Royal Marines. They also served in lightly armoured cars retrieving downed fliers with the Royal Naval Service Armoured Car Division, and in the air.

At the outbreak of the war Lord Annesley volunteered for service along with his friend Sammy Ryan, proprietor of the Station Garage, Newcastle. Annesley was appointed Sub.Lieutenant RNVR, and Sammy was appointed Petty Officer. It would appear that the Navy did a read-across from Engineer Artificer to motor mechanics and drivers in respect of rank. Both men were soon in action with the retreat from Mons, Belgium. In his letter home of 07/10/1914, Lord Annesley describes the action - "We had a terrible day and night at Douai, where we were completely surrounded and



Annesley was last seen alive on 6 November 1914 leaving Eastchurch, England in a Bristol T.B.8 biplane, serial 1220, flown by Flight Lieutenant C.F. Beevor, R.N.A.S., bound for France / Flanders. They were never seen again

had to make a dash in the armoured cars. Four of them, two Maxims and some 30 men.

“I had an open touring car, and had two men out of five hit, and a shot through the radiator. This was all in the dark. Early next morning we had to leave our quarters at Hazelbrook and go to Antwerp, or rather eight miles out and join forces with a big lot of marines.

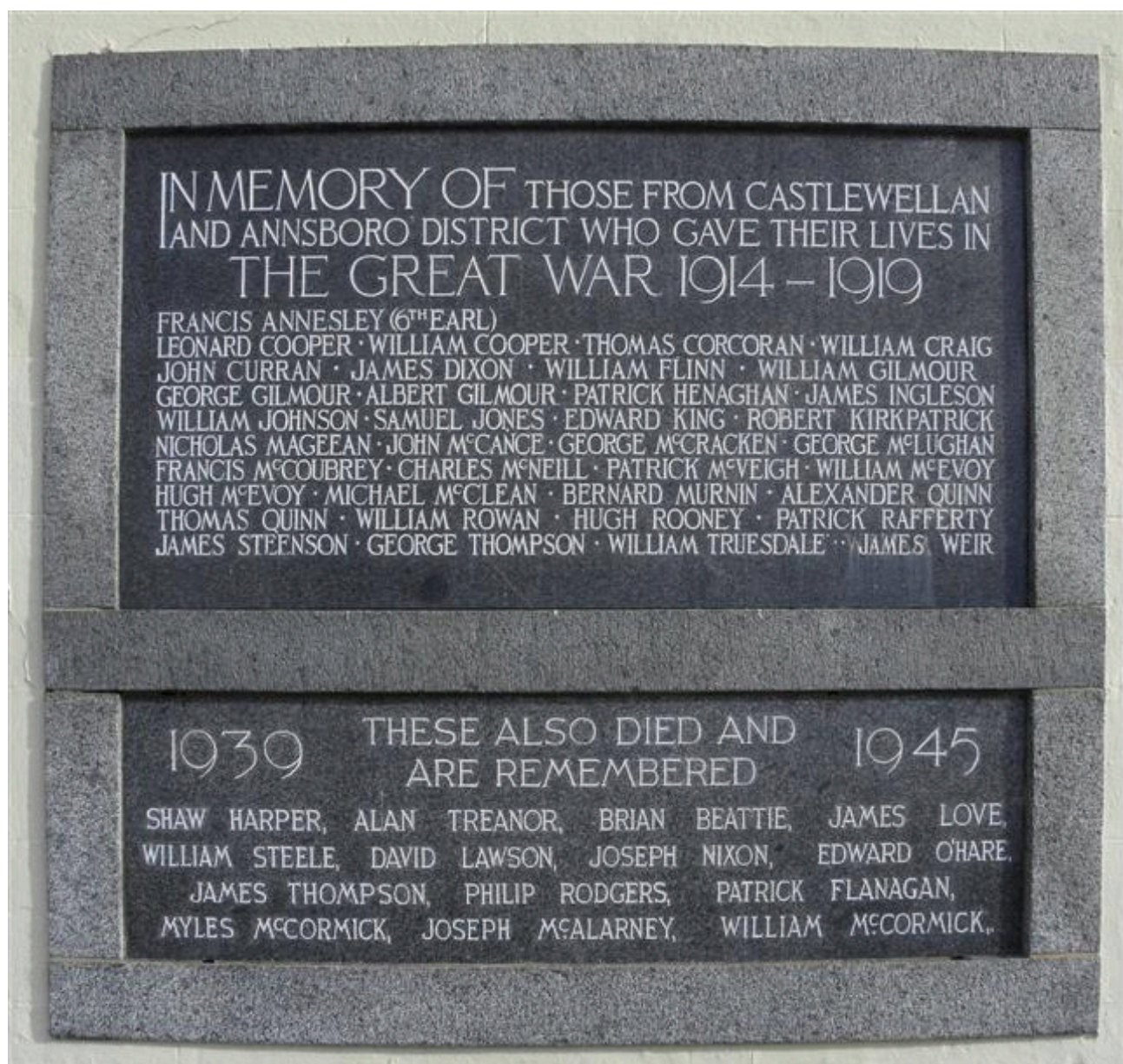
“We had been under shell fire for about fifty hours and got terrible cut up. I cannot enlarge on it as it is a huge nightmare to me. Sammy deserved the VC : he carried

wounded for two days and nights in a lorry with no assistance.

“All who could retired on the inner line of fortifications. I was one of them, thank God.

“Sammy is still out with the Red Cross lot. We are now retired across the river, and the main lot has gone to Ghent.

“I am in charge of the luggage with a guard of 60 Marines. We can see the shells bursting over the town from here and



are safe for the moment. The lorries ought to return for the stuff and us in five or six hours. Meanwhile I keep praying to God that we keep out of the awful shrapnel fire. A Tanbe German biplane has just flown over at 2,000 feet.

“The men wanted to fire but I did not let them. It is a glorious morning and the whole population and Belgian army are retreating. War is hell”.

Further letters from Lord Annesley tell of the scenes at Antwerp. He writes of the city being, “totally deserted, broad avenues without trams, motor cars or pedestrians, and the gloom intensifies when one thinks of the suffering, losses, and despair of the past two months, culminating in bombardment, fire and evacuation”.

In the retreat to Antwerp Lord Annesley describes seeing a big motor lorry which had stuck on a pontoon bridge. “Some 30 men shoved with a will until it was extracted.

Amongst those to lend a hand was Mr. Winston Churchill!”.

The last correspondence received from Lord Annesley was that he was scouting in an aeroplane at Ypres where a great battle was raging.

He was last seen alive on 06/11/1914 leaving England in a biplane for France. He was never seen again. (A future issue of Remembrance Ni will focus on the early naval aviators in World War 1 from Northern Ireland).

Sammy Ryan’s war continued. He served on the seaplane carrier Ben myChree which prior to the war had been an Isle

of Man tourist boat. He survived when it was sunk off the Gallipoli peninsular. He rose to Chief Petty Officer and survived the war. He served as chaffeur to the Annesleys, ran the post office in Castlewellan and taught motor-engineering classes in the local technical college.

On this Day – November 5

1914

The Lakenhalle (Cloth Hall) in Ypres, West Flanders.

The first artillery shells hit the Cloth Hall on 05/11/1914 and by December 1914 it had received serious damage. In April 1915 the Germans moved larger guns in to the area and they began the systematic destruction of Ypres and by 1918 only a small part of the belfry wall remained.

Detailed reconstruction of the Cloth Hall was carried out between 1928 and 1967.

As with all of Ypres it is hard to appreciate that they have been raised again from the ruins and the rubble.

1939

The United States modified its neutrality stance in World War II to allow "cash and carry" purchases of arms by belligerents, a policy favoring Britain and France.

Rear-Admiral Hugh Sinclair, head of British Secret Intelligence Service (MI6), died of cancer. Succeeded by his deputy, Colonel Stewart Menzies.

1941

Finnish forces capture the Baltic naval base of Hang that Finland was compelled to lease to the Soviets in 1940.

Units of 11th Army capture Fedosia in the Crimea.

1942

The Italian 20th Motorized Corps is destroyed. Rommel re-issues his orders for retreat with only 12 tanks left. 10,724 Axis prisoners are taken by the British, including nine generals.

Carlson's Raiders (US Marines) land at Aola Point, Guadalcanal to harass Japanese behind lines.

1943

Quote from Nazi newspaper, Der Stürmer, published by Julius Streicher – "It is actually true that the Jews have, so to speak, disappeared from Europe and that the Jewish 'Reservoir of the East' from which the Jewish pestilence has for centuries beset the peoples of Europe has ceased to exist. But the Fuhrer of the German people at the beginning of the war prophesied what has now come to pass."

The U.S. Fifth Army captures Isernia, 50 miles North of Naples and links up with Eighth Army moving North West from Foggia. US casualties in Mediterranean since the landings in North Africa is given as 31,126.

A Russian breakout to the North of Kiev is achieved with their tank army's driving throughout the night.

Roll of Honour – November 5

Representing their comrades who died on this day

1914

+ANNESLEY, Francis

RNVR. RNAS. Sub-Lieutenant. Before he was 21 years of age he sailed from Liverpool to Vancouver, around Cape Horn, serving as a sailor before the mast. Later he crossed the Atlantic on board a three-masted schooner yacht Karina as one of the guests of Robert E. Todd of the New York Yacht club. He was a noted big game shot.

Prior to joining 2 (Naval) Squadron, RNAS at Eastchurch, he distinguished himself serving with the RNAS Armoured Car Division, with his armoured motorcar in helping to check the advance of the Germans on Brussels and in the Defence of Antwerp.

He was last seen alive on 6/11/1914 leaving Eastchurch, England in a Bristol TB8 Biplane, serial 1220, flown by Flight Lieut C F Beevor, RNAS, bound for France / Flanders. They were never seen again. His death was presumed on 2/12/1914. Two German prisoners had been interrogated and it was established that the two aviators had been shot down when a German shell had hit the petrol tank of their aircraft and it had fallen in flames near Dixmude.

Francis Annesley, 6th Earl Annesley, was the only son of Hugh Annesley, 5th Earl Annesley and his first wife, Mabel Markham. He was born on 25/02/1884 at Castlewellan. On 14/02/1909 he married Evelyn Hester Mundy. They had no children. Between 1884 and 1908 he was styled as Viscount Glerawly. He was educated at Eton and Trinity College, Cambridge. He succeeded as Earl 15/12/1908. St John's Parish Church, Newcastle WM, Castlewellan WM

+DEVINE, James

Royal Scots Fusiliers. 2nd Btn. 4376. Died 05/11/1914. Born in Magherafelt. Enlisted in Glasgow. Ypres (Menin Gate) Memorial, West-Vlaanderen, Belgium

1918

+BLACK, J

Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, 6th Btn. Private 19209. Died 05/11/1918. Age 23. Son of Benjamin Black, of Artabracka, Portadown. St Souplet British Cemetery, France

+CARSON, John

US Army. 315th. Infantry Regiment. Private. Died 05 - 06/11/1918. Age 25. Living in Philadelphia pre war. From Craigs, Cullybackey. Meuse-Argonne Cemetery. Cunningham Memorial Presbyterian Church RH, family memorial Pound Cemetery Cullybackey

+GASTON, James

RAMC. Captain. MC. Died 05/11/1918. Age 36. Ballymena Academy, Queen's College, Belfast; and the Royal University of Ireland - where he graduated M.B., B.S.R.U.I. in 1906. He had been in practice at Cloughmills, Co. Antrim,

and when war broke out he was engaged in an extensive practice in Durham. He enlisted in Washington. He gained a temporary commission in the RAMC at the rank of lieutenant on 28/12/1914 and was promoted to temporary Captain one year later. James entered the war in France on 19/05/1915. After serving with a West Riding Field Ambulance he was attached as Medical Officer to the 5th Bn. King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry. He was wounded in September 1916, then after recovering returned to France in January 1917, and was attached as Medical Officer to the 4th Bn. Suffolk Regiment. He was awarded the Military Cross "For conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty. He attended the wounded of five other units besides his own throughout the day. The next day he led a party out in front and recovered twelve more wounded who were lying out. Throughout he set a splendid example to all." James was the eldest son of Andrew and Marian nee Tate Gaston of Carabeg, Cloughmills. "His brother, Captain Andrew Gaston, RAMC, is also a holder of the Military Cross and a younger brother, Dr. John Gaston is practising in Chester." Ballymena Observer, November 15, 1918. Arras Road Cemetery, Roclincourt, Pas de Calais, France

+EDMONDSON, John

Royal Irish Rifles, 7th Btn. Rifleman. 17598. Died 05/11/1918. Age 45. Husband of Margaret Jane Edmondson, of 20, Beggs St., Sandy Row, Belfast. Belfast City Cemetery

+McCONVILLE, Michael James

Royal Irish Fusiliers. Depot. Corporal. 5308. Died 05/11/1918 at home. Age 26. Enlisted in 1908. Discharged

due to wounds in February 1916 and awarded the Silver War Badge. Son of Patrick and Sarah McConville, of 20, High St., Bessbrook. St Malachy Roman Catholic Churchyard, Camlough

+STERLING, Walter Ambrose

RAF. Private 2nd Class. 310462. Died 05/11/1918. Aged 14. Son of Wesley and Margaret Sterling, of 68, Newport St., Belfast. Shankill Graveyard, Belfast

+WATSON, Elizabeth Harvey

Queen Alexandra's Imperial Military Nursing Service. Staff Nurse. Died 05/11/1918. Age 30. Daughter of Robert H. Watson, of Hillsborough St., Dromore, Co. Down. Caudry British Cemetery, Nord, France. Memorial St Anne's Cathedral, Belfast

1919

+NEWELL, Joseph

Royal Irish Regiment. Private. 3430. Died 05/11/1919. Age 47. Son of Robert and Mary Newell of Belfast; husband of Mary Ann Newell, of 11, Sultan St., Belfast. Milltown Roman Catholic Cemetery, Belfast

1939

+CAIRNS, Archibald Joseph

RNR. Seaman. P/X 18342A. HM Trawler Northern Rover. Died 05/11/1939. Age 25. Son of James and Elizabeth Cairns, Ballycastle. Portsmouth Naval Memorial, Panel 36

1940

+CURRY, Richard

RN. Ordinary Signalman. C/SSX 29509. HMS Jervis Bay. Died 05/11/1940. Age 19. On 05/11/1940 HMS Jervis Bay was acting as sole escort for a freighter convoy when it was engaged by the German pocket battleship Admiral Scheer. To protect the convoy (37 Freighter Convoy HX84), HMS Jervis Bay ordered the convoy to scatter and attacked the Admiral Scheer alone. This gallant but unequal action which lasted for 24 minutes resulted in the loss of HMS Jervis Bay and the deaths of her Captain and 198 of her crew. Their sacrifice, however, was not in vain as 32 freighters from the convoy escaped into the closing darkness. The Captain of the Jervis Bay, Edward Fegen, was posthumously awarded the Victoria Cross. The Jervis Bay was a converted passenger ship which was taken over by the Admiralty in 1939 and equipped with seven 6 inch guns and re-designated as an armed merchant cruiser. A book has been published about the sinking of the Jervis Bay - "If the Gods are Good: The Sacrifice of HMS Jervis Bay". Son of Thomas and Mary Curry, Coagh. Chatham Naval Memorial Panel 37

1942

+TRAYNOR, Patrick

Pioneer Corps. Private. 13024745. Died 05/11/1942. Aged 44. Newspaper reports suggest his death occurred at a Japanese hospital. Son of Patrick and Jane Traynor; husband to Maggie Traynor, of Ballycastle. The couple had one daughter and two sons at Pat's time of death. Labuan War Cemetery, Malaysia

1943

+BURNS, Thomas Hugh

Royal Army Service Corps. Driver. T/198213. Died 05/11/1943. Aged 43. Son of Mr. and Mrs. H. Burns, of Lisburn; husband to Margaret E. Burns, of Lisburn. Lisburn Cemetery

+DARLINGTON, Charles Arnold

RNVR. Chaplain. HMS Drake. Died 05/11/1943. Aged 30. HMS Drake was a barracks at Plymouth. Church of Ireland clergyman. TCD, BA 1935. He was made a Deacon in 1936 and ordained Priest by the Bishop of Down in 1937. He was Curate - assistant of Trinity College Mission, Belfast, off the Shankill Rd., until 1939. Son of Charles Horace John and Frances Ellen Darlington of Enniskerry, Co. Wicklow. Plymouth (Western Mill) Cemetery

+GORDON, Walter

RAFVR. Sergeant. 1016772. Died 05/11/1943. Aged 21. 616 Sqdn. Clerk in Secretary's Office, QUB. Son of Thomas and Charlotte Gordon, of Ballynahinch. Runnymede Memorial, Panel 151. QUB RH

+JEFFERSON, Thomas Francis

RAFVR. Warrant Officer. 1062362. Died on 05/11/1943. Aged 23. Son of John Frazer and Margaret Ann Valentine Jefferson of Holywood, Co. Down. Holywood cemetery.

+McMASTER, James

Royal Irish Fusiliers, 2nd Btn. Fusilier . 6978240. Died between 15/11/1943 and 16/11/1943. Believed to be in fighting in the Leros area. Aged 25. Born in the Clogher area. Son of Thomas and Maud McMaster, of Ballydrain, Co. Down. Athens Memorial, Phaleron, Athens, Greece. Clogher WM

+MILNES-GASKELL, Charles Thomas

Coldstream Guards. Lieutenant Colonel. 41120. Died 05/11/1943 in an air crash returning from Moscow. Aged 35. He was serving with special forces as SOE Liaison Officer with Russian N.K.V.D. Son of Evelyn and Constance Milnes Gaskell; husband to Patricia Milnes Gaskell (nee Hare) daughter of Richard Granville Hare, 4th Earl of Listowel and the Hon. Freda Vanden-Bempde-Johnstone, of Beaconsfield, Buckinghamshire. Halfaya Sollum War Cemetery, Egypt. Dungannon WM, St Anne's C of I WM, Dungannon

1944

+FFORDE Charles Holt

RN. Commander 6979074. Died 05/11/1944. Aged 60. Son of James and Patricia Fforde. Husband to May Fforde, Lurgan. Gillingham (Woodlands) Cemetery, Kent.

1945

+MALLEY, William Edward

RAFVR.Sergeant. 993015. Mentioned in Despatches. Died 05/11/1945. Aged 30. Son of the Revd. Augustus Malley, Th.L., and Annie Elizabeth Malley, of Hemel Hempstead Vicarage, Hertfordshire; husband to Margaret Malley, of Lisburn. Malta Memorial, Malta

VETERANS

ALLEN, Robert

RN. AB. 214970. DSM. London Gazette 2 November 1917. '... for services in submarines in enemy waters'. Born in

Limavady on 05/10/1885. A Message Boy by occupation, he entered the Royal Navy as a Boy 2nd Class on 14/05/1901. He was promoted to Boy 1st Class when on the Black Prince in August 1902, Ordinary Seaman when on the Royal Oak in October 1903 and attained the rank of Able Seaman when on the same ship in February 1905. He was discharged to shore by purchase on 03/02/1912 and joined the RFR. Recalled to active service in August 1914, he entered the Submarine Service, mostly based on the depot ships Dolphin and Maidstone. He was based on the the cruiser Fearless, March-December 1917, which was the 12th Submarine Flotilla Leader attached to the Grand Fleet based at Rosyth - the flotilla composed of the infamous 'K' Class submarines. For his services on submarines during the year 1917 he was awarded the DSM. He was again based on the Fearless and served on the submarine K8, 04/01/1918 - 08/03/1918. The vessel was not present at the 'battle of May Island' and both Allen and the submarine survived the war; the submarine being sold for scrap in 1923, Allen being demobilised on 09/06/1921. Born Limavady 05/10/1885. Later resided on Ravenhill Rd., Belfast. ADM 188/376/214970

SMITH, Gilbert

RN. Stoker 1st Class. K22719. Enrolled 11/06/1914 for 12 years. War service in Vivid II and Tiger. Served 07/12/1927. Born Limavady 05/11/1895. Bellhouse Lane, Coleraine. ADM 188/912/22719

TODD, William Ferguson

RMLI. Private. 18467. Plymouth Division. Enlisted 14/10/1915 (Underage). Invalided 01/12/1915. Born

Coleraine 05/11/1897. Nursery House, Coleraine. ADM
159/162/18467

Every day is a Remembrance Day

We will remember them

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masthead.**

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

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