



Ards and North Down Borough Council presented specially commissioned silver poppies to local World War Two veterans at a ceremony in Bangor Castle last year.

The veterans were officially honoured by the Council for the invaluable service they provided during the Second World War and were presented with a silver poppy as a mark of gratitude.





Maureen Lucy Lightbody



Maureen joined the WRENS straight from school in 1943, at the age of 18. She signed up in Belfast and was kitted out on HMS Caroline, which was the supply ship.

As she was just 18 and her mother was a young widow, Maureen agreed not to be posted to England. She was stationed in the Royal Hotel, Bangor, which was shared between the Royal Navy and the US Navy.

Maureen was in the Signal Distribution Office, training to be a Visual Signaller on the Aldis Lamp. Her duties involved being posted out to both Orlock Point and Grey Point where she signalled code to the huge volume of ships entering and leaving the Lough.

She was on duty during the build-up to D-Day and remembers, in particular, the huge US battleships, the Arkansas, Texas and the Nevada.

Although very young and far from the theatre of war, Maureen recognises that she had, compared to many, an easier war but feels very much part of what happened as Bangor played such a crucial role in the build-up to the D-Day Landings.



Frederick Edward (Ted) Halsey and Arthur Dennis Bomber



Frederick Edward (Ted) Halsey

Ted volunteered for the Royal Navy when he was 17. He originally wanted to enrol in the Royal Marines or the MTB rescue services but was sent to HMS Raleigh near Plymouth where he completed his Naval seamanship course.

Ted was transferred to the Fleet Air Arm and was then sent to the RAF Technical Establishment to train as an Aircraft Electrical Fitter. He was subsequently promoted to a Leading Electrical Fitter where he was greatly involved in the engine modifications to the Aircraft Carrier based Fairey Barracuda Torpedo/Dive Bomber.

It was the Barracuda that played a major part in the raid on the German battleship Tirpitz in Norway on the 3rd April 1944 and left this major target badly damaged.

He was due to be promoted to Petty Officer but volunteered for early demob in June 1945 with 3 months left on his P.O. probationary period left to serve.

Ted put his electrical expertise to good use post-war when he joined a company specialising in X-ray machines. In 1957, he formed his own highly successful companies; Ulster Anaesthetics and Ulster X-Ray which became the main suppliers to hospitals in Ireland.

He is most proud of the fact that he designed and installed the first cardiac intensive care unit in Ireland at Newtownards Hospital for the great Dr Jack Barbour. He is also proud of his involvement with Sir Frank Pantridge in the development of the portable defibrillator which is now in use worldwide.

Arthur Dennis Bomber

Arthur was called up for service on 15 January 1942 and joined the Royal Berkshire Regiment. Following his training he was sent to India where he saw action on the Arakan Front. His regiment was sent to Kohima to relieve the Royal West Kent Regiment had managed to halt the Japanese advance.

On the 23 April 1944 (St George's Day) he was badly wounded and his left leg suffered severe injury. He was in such a critical state that he was given the last rites by a Padre but he survived and left India on 22 July 1944.

Arthur was discharged on 27 September 1944 in the rank of Corporal. He suffered very badly from his wounds and two years later a below-knee amputation of his left leg was carried out.

A native of Kent, he moved to Northern Ireland in 2015 to live near his son.



Ronald Martin Wallace, John Henry Gilpin and Henry Morrell Murphy



Ronald Martin Wallace

Ron joined the Royal Navy on the day after his 18th birthday in 1944.

Following training, he served as a radio operator on a motor torpedo boat in the Mediterranean off the coasts of Italy and Greece. The motor torpedo boats could operate at high speed enabling them to mount a fast response to threats.

After the war, his experience as a radio operator led to him working for GCHQ in various countries around the world, before retiring to Bangor.

John Henry Gilpin

John enlisted in 1939 at the age of 17. Two years later, he re-mustered to Air Gunner and served with RAF Bomber Command in Lancasters, Stirling Bombers, Flying Fortress and B17s.

Bomber Command was one of the most dangerous service branches to serve in with many of the crew killed, wounded or becoming Prisoners of War.

Henry Morrell Murphy

Henry joined the Royal Navy in 1942 where he was an Able Seaman and Submarine Detector. In 1944, he was serving on HMS Capel which had made contact with a submarine on Christmas Night and had made several unsuccessful attacks. Around noon on Boxing Day the ship was torpedoed and sank.

Henry was blown clear of the ship and when he came to his senses, he managed to get into a life raft. After a long two hours, he was picked up and taken to an American hospital about three miles from Cherbourg. After recovering from hypothermia, he was discharged the next morning. With few clothes and little to eat, he made his way to the harbour and managed to get on board one of the sister ships. After a few days, he arrived in Belfast.

Unknown to him, a priority telegram dated 30 December 1944 had been sent to his mother in Lisburn stating that he had been reported missing, presumed dead on war service.

When Henry arrived at his parents' home he was somewhat taken aback when his mother opened the door in tears. His father was also in a mournful state, but this was quickly changed to one of joy.

Henry is ever mindful of all this happening in his young life and always remembers the 80 shipmates who were less fortunate.