

St Margaret of Scotland Episcopal Church, Tayport

Murray Donaldson, christened Alistair, was 19 when he died in February 1941. He was the son of Richard and Elsie Donaldson of Tayport. He was serving in the Canadian Merchant Navy as a second radio officer on the SS Empire Blanda (Master George Allan Duncan). The SS Blanda was a Panamanian ship requisitioned by the Ministry of Trade in 1940 and brought into service. She sailed between the US and the UK bringing vital food and supplies. On 3rd February she left Halifax, Nova Scotia carrying a cargo of scrap iron, steel and explosives for Glasgow, as part of Convoy HX107. By the time the convoy passed south of Iceland she was straggled and on the 18th February she was reported missing. On the 19th February, just past 8am Joest Metzler, captain of UB 69, recorded the destruction of a ship south of Iceland which is presumed to be the SS Empire Blanda. The ship exploded and the U-boat was almost hit by falling debris. The merchant ship sank with the loss of all her 37 man crew. Murray Donaldson was the youngest man aboard. His named is engraved on the Mercantile Marine Memorial, Tower Hill in London.

Desmond Lenahan. The only record on the Commonwealth War Graves Commission for this name is for John Desmond Lenahan, pilot office with 607 squadron, Royal Air Force; the son of John and Sarah Lenahan of Hayes. He died aged 20 on the 9th September 1940. He is buried in Cranbrook Cemetery, in Kent. 607 Squadron took part in the Battle for France and from the start of September 1940 was based at Tangmere, fighting the Battle of Britain. P/O Lenahan was killed when his Hurricane was shot down in combat over Mayfield, East Sussex. The German airforce was attempting a massed raid on London which resulted in over 400 civilian deaths, 28 Luftwaffe losses and 16 planes from Fighter Command.

Leonard Main was 19 when he died on 9th February 1941. He served as a Sapper in the Royal Engineers attached to Royal Artillery 533 (Orkney) Fortress Coast Regt. His unit was charged with protecting the Royal Navy which was based in Scapa Flow to protect it from the depredations of the German U-boats. Leonard's parents David and Alice lived in Tayport with his sisters. Leonard Main is buried in Tayport New Cemetery.

Robert Milne – there are several possible records on Commonwealth War Graves Commission but the most likely is the record for Robert Farquharson Milne, son of Kenneth and Emma Milne and husband of Christina Smart Milne of East Newport, Fife. Milne was a Corporal in the 7th Black Watch when he died aged 25 on 1st November 1944. At this point in the war the 7th Black Watch, as part of the 51st Highland Division, was engaged in forcing the Germans out of Holland. Milne is buried in Bergen op Zoom War Cemetery.

John Pryde lived with his wife Elizabeth at 14 Cowgate Crescent Tayport. He was serving in the Merchant Navy when he was killed (aged 27) on 2nd October 1941. Pryde died during a major air raid on South Shields when an estimated 50 bombers attacked the area in an attempt to disrupt the ship-building and ship repair services. He is buried in South Shields County Durham.

John Milne, recorded on the Commonwealth War Graves Commission as Jack Black Milne, was the son of Alfred and Jessie Milne of Tayport. He served as a Corporal with 7th Battalion of the Black Watch. He was 24 when he died between 23rd and 24th October 1942 the first night of the 2nd Battle of El Alamein, when the Allies achieved their first significant defeat of the Axis forces.