

## Researching the Life & Death of Allan Gregory (30-32)

The Friends were recently offered some papers relating to this OC, a Fleet Air Arm pilot who died in WWII. He's listed on our WWII Memorial Board in the chapel and Geoffrey Haskins (40-43) had already found summary details of his death . As usual I could not avoid the temptation to help his relatives learn more about him.

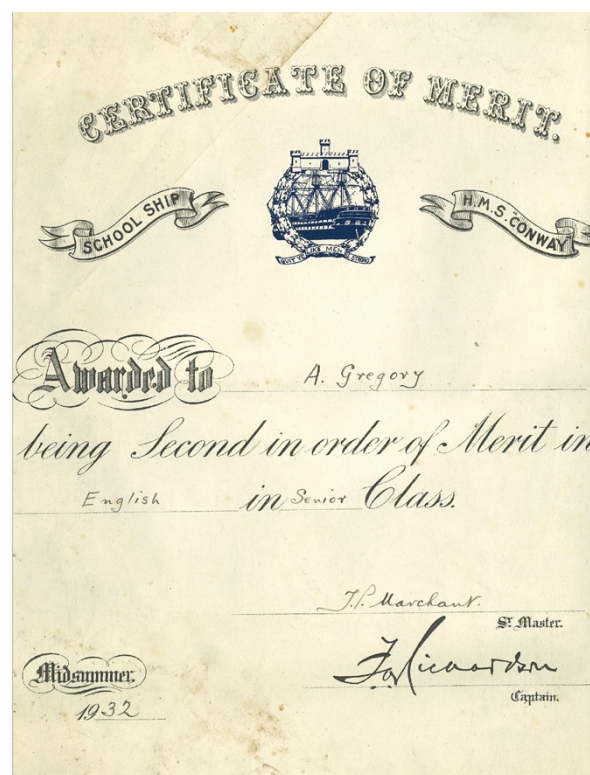
There's not much information about Allan or his unit online so it wasn't easy to piece everything together. I may have joined up a few dots incorrectly so if you know of more accurate sources please let me know.

Allan was registered by Conway as 'Alan' so at some point subsequently he changed his name to 'Allan'. He was born on 24<sup>th</sup> January 1915 at Wolverton Bucks. His father was Alfred Charles Gregory, a "Boot Buyer". He joined Conway from Ipswich Municipal Secondary School and was then living at 45 Gladstone Road, Ipswich, Suffolk, IP3 8AT



He became JCC Port Fore and then SCC Hold. He is not named in any photos for his years. In his last term he won the MMSA Silver Medal for the greatest proficiency in all branches of education and training, the White Star Line Prize for Practical Navigation & Nautical Astronomy (a sextant), and was awarded a Certificate of Merit for second place in English exams. On 8<sup>th</sup> June 1932 he rowed Bow in the losing gig race against Worcester at Rock Ferry. He was 17 years 5 mths old, 5' 11" tall, chest 35" and wight 10st 9.5lbs.

He gained an Extra Passing Out Certificate and joined Elders & Fyffes Line also being appointed Midshipmen RNR



Nothing is currently known of his service in Elders & Fyffes from August 1932 or until his death in March 1943 when he was killed on air operations on 12<sup>th</sup> March 1943 while a naval pilot with 828 Sqn, FAA in Malta and was buried in Sicily.

<https://www.naval-history.net/xDKCas1943-03MAR.htm>).

After some research I found his Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) war grave in Catania, Sicil.

<https://www.cwgc.org/find-records/find-war-dead/casualty-details/2075877/allan-gregory/>.

He died with two other men from his squadron named Appleton and Forrest.

<https://www.naval-history.net/xDKCas1943-03MAR.htm>.

The three men remain united in death as they are buried alongside each other in Catania.

<https://www.cwgc.org/find-records/find-war-dead/casualty-details/2075877/allan-gregory/#&qid=2&pid=1>.

Their graves were at first marked as names unknown and as RAF.

I cannot find detail of the operations on 12<sup>th</sup> March that cost the three men their lives so their causes of death are difficult to determine. Several terms are used to describe a service\*\* person's cause of death. 'Killed in Action' is used to note someone killed by enemy fire or by friendly fire while in action. 'Died of Wounds' indicates that the person was injured in action, survived the engagement but died soon afterwards from their injuries. 'Died in/on Service' indicates a death during hostilities but not caused by direct or indirect enemy action, e.g. a plane crash while on leave or a heart attack. Allan is listed as Killed in Air Operations but I take that to mean Killed in Action because they are buried in Sicily not Malta indicating that they crashed or were shot down over or close to Sicily. The Germans/Italians must have recovered their bodies and buried them on the island identifying them simply as aviators. That explains why the CWGC initially identified them as RAF. Somehow, probably lost to us forever, they were subsequently identified as naval aviators and named.

He served in 828 Naval Air Sqn RN

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/828\\_Naval\\_Air\\_Squadron](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/828_Naval_Air_Squadron)  
<https://web.archive.org/web/20080720061113/http://www.fleetairmarchive.net/Squadrons/828.html>

and was based in RAF Hal Far, Malta

<https://cloudobservers.co.uk/memories/ashore/hal-far/>

There's a very good chance he is in this Feb 1943 video.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-9QYO9yn0xc>

FAA units at RAF Hal Far were under the command of HMS St Angelo (actually in Fort St Angelo)

<https://heritagemalta.mt/explore/fort-st-angelo/>

Hal Far was also the base for the famous planes Faith, Hope and Charity.

In early 1943 Rommel and the Afrika Corps were facing defeat in North Africa and were being supplied from/withdrawn to Sicily. 828 Sqn were attacking enemy vessels and dropping mines to block Sicilian ports to hasten Rommel's defeat.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/history/ww2peopleswar/stories/63/a2104363.shtml>

They flew Albacore aircraft.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fairey\\_Albacore](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fairey_Albacore)

Alfie Windsor (64-68)  
9<sup>th</sup> August 2023