

ST JOHN'S PARISH HERITAGE GROUP, LECARROW, CO ROSCOMMON



SURGEON COMMANDER JAMES MICHAEL MCNAMARA

James Michael McNamara was born in Roscommon in 1902 to John and Mary McNamara. James attended St. Coman's Intermediate school and University College Dublin where he qualified in medicine at the age of 21. James was an all-round athlete and Light Heavyweight Boxing Champion 1922/23 while attending University.

James Michael McNamara practised medicine from Nov. 1923 to Mar. 1926 in Aberbargoed, Mon., Wales and July 1926 to December 1928 in Portsmouth, U.K. before embarking on a career in the Royal Navy.

From December 1928 James served on the

| | |
|-----------------|-------------------|
| H.M.S Crocus | 1929-1930 |
| H.M.S Ladybird | 1930-1932 |
| H.M.S. Vincent. | 1932-1933 |
| H.M.S. Alecto. | 1933-1934 |
| H.M.S. Danae. | 1936-1938 |
| H.M.S. Hermes. | 1939- April 1942. |

until his last ship the aircraft carrier *H.M.S. Hermes*. On the *Hermes*, James witnessed naval warfare many times, including the pursuit of German warships. The *Hermes'* aircraft were also involved in attempting to sink the French battleship *Richelieu* to prevent the German naval forces using it.

While stationed in the Indian Ocean off Ceylon, present day Sri Lanka, *Hermes* was attacked by Japanese aircraft and sunk with the loss of 307 officers and crew. The *Hermes* and the *H.M.A.S Vampire* were both sunk. The *Vampire* lost one officer and eight crew.

The hospital ship *H.M.H.S Vita* picked up the survivors from both ships. It is recorded "James Michael McNamara died of wounds inflicted during the Japanese attack on the *H.M.S Hermes*", so it likely he was picked up with survivors and later buried at sea.

Surgeon Commander James Michael McNamara's personnel effects, medals, photographs and other memorabilia have been donated to Roscommon County Museum, The Square Roscommon. Ireland.

Christopher Keane