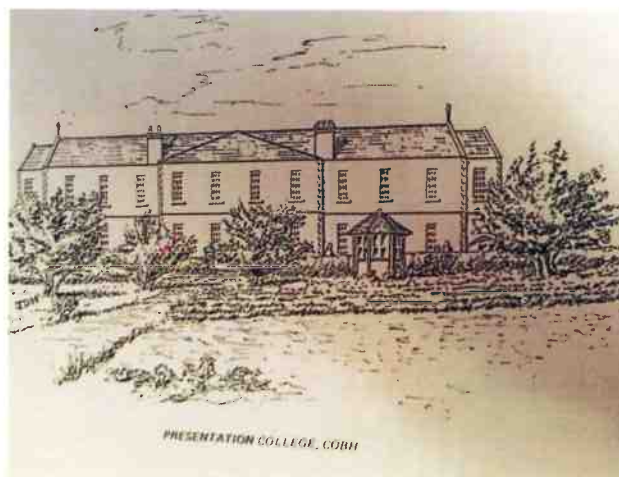


By POPPY  
Buttner



**Cornelius (Con) Powell CPO Royal Navy (1912-1997)**

Con Powell is my Grandfather's Uncle and my Great Grand Uncle.  
He was born in 1912 and lived in Cobh (then Queenstown).



He was educated in the local Presentation Brothers College and did the equivalent of his Leaving Certificate in 1928.

During Con's teenage years the British Navy was based in Cork Harbour as the ports were still held by the British Government and the Royal Navy were present in the town.

It was therefore the practice for numbers of young men to enlist in the Royal Navy in seeking a career. Con enlisted at the age of 18 years and left home and went to the Royal Naval School Davenport in England as part of his initial training.

One Saturday night when out in Davenport he missed the bus back to the Naval Base and was very concerned that he would not be back before 11.00 p.m. and would then be registered as AWOL (absent without leave). This would have serious consequences including a possible court martial. A man was standing in the bus shelter and saw that Con was worried. He asked him what was wrong, and Con explained. The man recognised Con's Cork accent and after some discussion it transpired that the man was Con's godfather and he arranged to get safely back in time to the naval base.

Following his training he was posted to the British Naval Base in Singapore where he spent several years before being transferred to South Africa. Over the period from 1931 to 1938 he was promoted up the ranks and became a Chief Petty Officer. On his visits back to Cobh

he fell in love with Cynthia O’Gorman (an Aunt of Paddy O’Gorman of RTE fame)



and they were married in 1938 the year before the outbreak of World War 2.



His first posting during the war was on a submarine in the North Atlantic.

This was a dangerous assignment and his responsibility was to ensure that the torpedoes were loaded correctly in the loading bay. The danger surfaced when the submarine was tracked by a German destroyer and the submarine would be bombarded with depth charges which if the submarine did not take evasive action could result in its destruction. The war meant that he was away at sea for long periods and he missed getting back to his wife and parents. It was during one of these absences from home that Con’s youngest brother Frank (21), who was a member of the Port Control which was the forerunner of the Irish Navy, was lost tragically in Cork Harbour in December 1942 and Frank’s body was never found.

The irony of war, where one brother survived being in a submarine and the other was lost while checking an Irish Shipping vessel, the Irish Popular, in Cork Harbour.

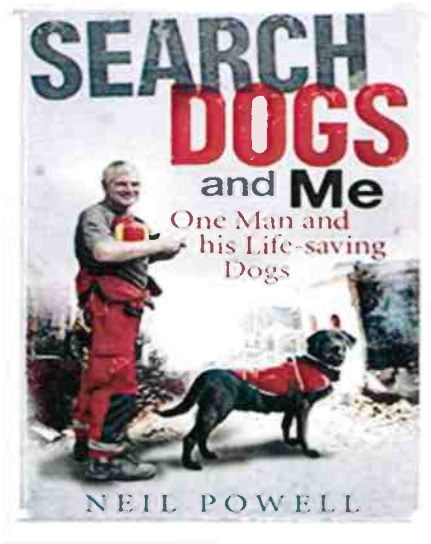


There is a memorial erected on the quay in Cobh honouring the 5 victims of this tragedy.

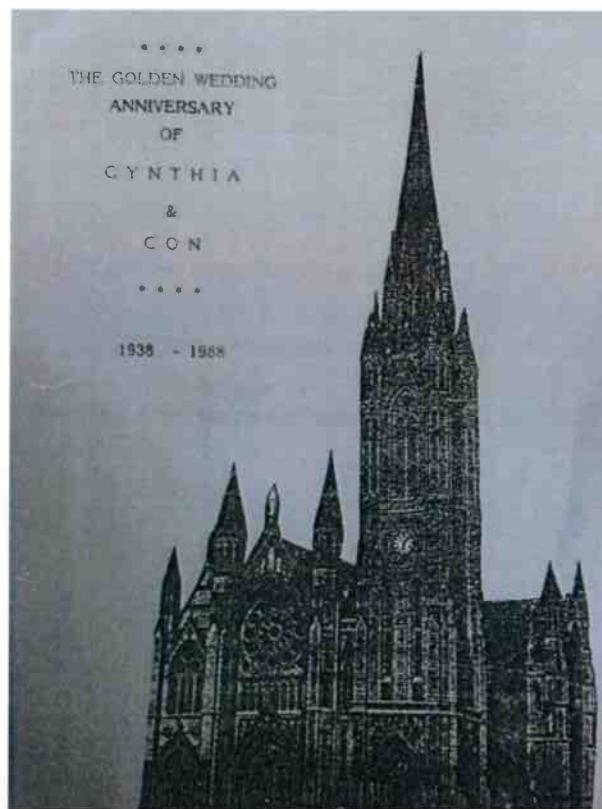
When the war ended in 1945 Con was posted to Portsmouth and continued in the Royal Navy until 1948 when he retired. On his retirement he joined the Royal Naval Reserve and he was posted to the naval base in Rosyth in Scotland. He remained there until he was posted to Belfast in 1954 and was based on a retired naval vessel HMS Caroline. He was responsible for the Management and Administration of personnel in the Royal Naval Reserve for Northern Ireland. As a result of the “ Troubles” in Northern Ireland, in 1972 Con decided to retire and reside once more in his native Cobh.

He and his wife Cynthia lived in a house overlooking Cork Harbour. Their family consisted of two daughters and one son.

Their son Neil was the founder of SARDA (Search and Rescue Dog Association) in 1987 which now has support units based across all of Ireland, England, Scotland and Wales. Neil wrote a book on his experiences “Search Dogs and Me”.



He has experienced searches in many tragedies including the Lockerbie Air Disaster and the shooting down of the Malaysian plane in Ukraine.



Con & Cynthia celebrated their Golden Wedding Anniversary in 1988 in St. Coleman's Cathedral where they were originally married.

Con went to his eternal reward in 1997 and at his graveside the British Legion gave him an oration for his life in the service of the Royal Navy.