

Tributes

The Gallagher Family received a letter from Robert Kennedy dated 10th April 1966 in which he penned that *'Winston Churchill said courage is rightly esteemed as the first of all human qualities because it is the one that guarantees all others. This Courage Corporal Gallagher gave to all of us. To him and to his family are due the thanks of a humbly grateful nation.'* (Michael Feeney)ⁱ

US Senate minority leader Chuck Schumer stated that *'Cpl Gallagher's breathtaking bravery and courage deserves to be memorialised and naming a navy ship after the Cpl Gallagher would be the perfect tribute to recognise this Irish-American hero on behalf of a people who have contributed so mightily to the greatness of our nation.'* He continued that there is *"a powerful and growing chorus of supporters from Ballyhaunis to Brooklyn who are for naming a United States Navy destroyer after the Vietnam war hero from Co Mayo, Cpl Patrick 'Bob' Gallagher, and I am proud today to add my voice to this very worthy cause. Amongst those that corresponded with the Gallagher family following his demise was Mr. Kennedy. He quoted Winston Churchill who said 'courage is rightly esteemed as the first of all human qualities because it is the one that guarantees all others.' 'This courage Corporal Gallagher gave to all of us. To him and to his family are due the thanks of a humbly grateful Nation.'*ⁱⁱ

Corporal Patrick Gallagher has Honoree Record 44183: <https://militaryhallof Honor.com/>

The name Patrick Gallagher is inscribed on Panel 17E Line 71 of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall: <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/98386412/patrick-gallagher>

50th Anniversary

The fiftieth anniversary of Corporal Gallagher's demise was Commemorated on 30th March 2018 with an Event in Ireland. According to his sister Pauline: *'It was the hero's welcome that he should have gotten 50 years ago'* Occasion began with a mass in honour of Patrick Gallagher also others who had lost their lives in their military duty. The flags of Ireland & the U. S. lined the Church with Members of the Irish Defence Forces also U.S. Military in uniform. A piper led about six hundred people to Gallagher's gravesite where a monument to him was unveiled. Celebration continued in the Augustinian Abbey at Ballyhaunis as various items included Corporal Gallagher's letters, uniforms & medals were on display along with pictures of him. His sister Pauline attended with her three surviving siblings also her nieces & nephews. She reported that *'It was amazing that so much was kept for 50 years, and we were glad to be able to share it with all the people who had shared with us the loss of our brother'* *'We are very grateful to the town and the people for keeping his memory alive.'*ⁱⁱⁱ

Members of the defence forces with the US Army attended an Event in Ballyhaunis Friary that honoured Corporal Gallagher on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of his demise. Irish Minister of State for Defence Paul Kehoe laid a wreath then unveiled a plaque. The Ceremony was followed by an Exhibition Launch of Memorabilia of Corporal Gallagher's life. Friary. (Patsy Mc Garry 12th Mar 12 2018)^{iv}

Petition

During 2013 a group of Irish men had been discussing Corporal Gallagher at Mr Donnelly's Trinity Hall establishment in Dallas, Texas. Among the company was pilot Martin Durkan from Ballyhaunis (who informed them of Corporal Gallagher's life from an article in *The Irish Times*) An online petition was decided on to have a US Navy Ship named in his honour. The website *'Help Us Honor A Marine Corps Hero'* at www.patrickgallagherusmc.info was sponsored by Mr. Donnelly from Malahide Co. Dublin. A political campaign began in the U S when 10,000 signatures were secured.^v

‘The petition to have a ship named after Corporal Patrick Gallagher was inspired by an article written by Patsy McGarry that appeared in ‘The Irish Times’ during 1997’ Pilot Durkan told The Echo during 2013. (Ray O’Hanlon 22nd March 2022) vi

During July 2015 the Echo reported on four Billboards erected in boarding areas at Dublin Airport that told the story of a Co. Mayo - born Vietnam War hero. ‘It is hoped that the billboards, and favorable public reaction to them, will help in the effort to have a U.S. Navy ship named after Navy Cross winner Patrick “Bob” Gallagher.’ ‘The billboards provide a link to a website established to collect signatures for a petition to have Gallagher’s name attached to ship. The petition has been up and running for a couple of years and has already attracted a significant number of names.’ (Ray O’Hanlon 22nd March 2022) vii

Proposal

A Marine Corps veteran gave the final all clear for the naming of the last in the run of U.S. Navy Arleigh Burke Class Destroyers for Corporal Gallagher. Secretary Spencer met with Corporal Gallagher’s family; listened to their story, read their documents. His decision (*according to the family*) was the correct one as *‘to name a United States Navy destroyer to honour the extraordinary valor and ultimate sacrifice of this son of Erin who answered the call of his new nation. It is something no Irish American, no U.S. Marine, nor any patriot should ever forget., no U.S. Marine, nor any patriot should ever forget.’ (Ray O’Hanlon 22nd March 2022) viii*

Keel for the USS Patrick Gallagher was laid at Bath Iron Works in Maine on 30th March: the 55th Anniversary of Patrick Gallagher’s demise. Members of the Gallagher family in Ireland attended. Among the other attendees was to be General Walter Boomer USMC retired. General Boomer was Patrick’s commanding officer in Vietnam. During 2018 General Boomer travelled to Ireland to meet with the Gallagher family. He stated that *‘Patrick Gallagher was one of at least thirty – two Irish citizens who died in Vietnam.’* The Gallagher family believed that the ship would represent all U.S. servicemen & women who served at that time.’ (Ray O’Hanlon 22nd March 2022) ix

Rep. Kathleen Rice stated that *‘Corporal Gallagher made the ultimate sacrifice for his fellow Marines and for his adopted country. I have no doubt he is deserving of this honour, and I believe this is an opportunity to keep his legacy alive to guide and inspire current and future generations of American service members and citizens. I respectfully ask that you give Corporal Gallagher your full consideration as you progress through the Destroyer naming procedure.’ ‘Commander Patrick Nealon of VFW Post 2307, of Lynbrook, NY, has worked with Corporal Gallagher’s surviving family to honour his memory by telling the story of his service and sacrifice. 50 years after his death, Patrick’s family still resides in Lynbrook, and members of the community have mobilized to gather more than 10,000 signatures on a petition requesting that a Destroyer be named in his honour.’* She corresponded with navy secretary Spencer on the issue. (Ray O’Hanlon 22nd November 2017) x

USS Gallagher DDG - 127

On 12th March 2018 secretary of the U. S. Navy Richard V. Spencer named the next Arleigh Burke - Class guided - missile Destroyer in honour of Marine Corps Vietnam Veteran & Navy Cross recipient Corporal Patrick Gallagher. The *‘USS Gallagher DDG - 127’* the newest of the US Navy’s Guided Missile Destroyers will be built during the next four & a half years! (Ray O’Hanlon 12th April 2018) xi

The ship was to be constructed at Bath Iron Works: a division of general dynamics in Maine. The ship was be of five hundred & nine feet in length with a beam length of fifty - nine feet also be capable to operate at speeds in excess of thirty knots. It was expected to enter service when completed & sea trials during 2024: <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/98386412/patrick-gallagher>

Footnotes

ⁱ *The Connaught Telegraph* 4th May 2021

ⁱⁱ US Navy Ship (<https://www.irishtimes.com/news/ireland/irish-news/us-navy-ship-to-be-named-after-mayo-man-killed-in-vietnam-1.3424367>) [assessed 27th March 2022]

ⁱⁱⁱ Family of Mayo Man (<https://www.liberalt.com/stories/family-of-man-born-in-ireland-killed-in-vietnam-wants-us-navy-ship-named-in-his-honor,91311>) [assessed 25th March 2022]

^{iv} US Navy Ship (<https://www.irishtimes.com/news/ireland/irish-news/us-navy-ship-to-be-named-after-mayo-man-killed-in-vietnam-1.3424367>) [assessed 27th March 2022]

^v Ibid

^{vi} Memory Endures (<https://www.irishecho.com/2022/3/memory-endures-and-a-ship-takes-shape>) [assessed 30th March 2022]

^{vii} Ibid

^{viii} Ibid

^{ix} Ibid

^x Congresswomen (<https://www.irishcentral.com/news/kathleen-rice-patrick-gallagher-ship-navy-cross>) [assessed 4th May 2021]

^{xi} Navy Destroyer (www.irishecho.com/2018/4/navy-destroyer-will-carry-heros-full-name) [assessed 4th May 2021]