



remembrance ni



## Catania War Cemetery, Italy

Eighteen NI servicemen are recalled today. John Kinnin from Belfast died as a result of a training exercise with the Royal Ulster Rifles in 1942. His father Isaac died two days later as a result of the Belfast Blitz of 1941. A joint funeral took place to Carnmoney cemetery. Veteran Reggie McClelland from Bangor, a recipient of the Arctic Star,

recollects the hospitality of HMS Bluebell just before she was sunk by a U-boat off Murmansk. In 1944 Alan Bayne, a naval airman with family links from New Zealand back to Moneymore died in a flying accident. His remains were brought back to Cookstown where he is remembered.

## On this Day – February 17

**1915**

**Two RAMC officers who were graduates of QUB were Mentioned in Despatches. They were -**

### **BARBOUR, John Humphrey**

RAMC. Major. MiD 17/02/1915. French decorations. Shrewsbury School. QCB 1893. MB 1900, BCh, BAO. Lieutenant RAMC 29/01/1901, Captain 29/01/1904, Major 19/01/1913. Served South Africa 1901-02, Halifax, Nova Scotia 1903 - 05, India 1908 - 13, BEF France 1914 - 19. Son of Humphrey Barbour. Died 20/10/1944.

### **BEATTY, Martyn Cecil**

RAMC. Lt. Colonel. MiD 17/02/1915. SA Institute, Belfast. QCB/Edinburgh University. MB 1900, BCh, DPH 19003, RCPSI 1903. Lieutenant RAMC 27/06/1901. Captain 27/06/1904. Major 27/03/1913. Lt. Colonel 06/08/1915. Served in South Africa 1902, India 1903 - 09, BEF France 1914 - 16. East Africa 1916 - 19, Egypt 1920 - 21, India 1921 - 24, BAOR 1924 - 29. Son of Rev. John and Mrs

Mary Beatty, Ballycopeland. Died 01/06/1945, Evesham, Worcs. RCSI RH



**British troops reading newspapers on the top of an artillery shell dump outside the church at La Neuville, Corbie**

**17th February 1915 Belfast Newsletter**

**THE ROYAL IRISH RIFLES.**

**Colonel Wallace to Command New Battalion.**

Official sanction has been received for the formation of the new battalion of the Royal Irish Rifles in Newcastle. The battalion, which will probably be known as the 17th Royal Irish Rifles, will be a depot battalion for the nine service

battalions of the Royal Irish Rifles in the Ulster Division. Recruits will now be posted to Newcastle for training, instead of joining the existing battalions. The battalion will act as a feeder for the Ulster Division when it goes abroad, drafts being sent out from time to time to replace casualties and the wastage incidental to campaigning. The strength will be over 1,000 rank and file, with the usual proportion of officers.

The command of the new battalion has been given to Colonel Robert H. Wallace, C.B., who is well known in Belfast as Grand Master of the County Grand Lodge of the Orange Institution. Colonel Wallace, who has had a lengthened military career, commanded the 5th Battalion Royal Irish Rifles in the Boer war, being mentioned in despatches, and receiving the C.B. for his services. He retired from the command of the South Downs in 1913, after 34 years' service, and on the formation of the Ulster Division last autumn was appointed commandant of the camp at Newcastle. Colonel Wallace has been engaged on his new duties in connection with the depot battalion for some time, and already a number of second-lieutenants on probation are connected with it receiving training.

## **1922**

The Royal Air Force Ireland (Gp Capt I.M. Bonham-Carter) was formed. The life of this command was short and it was disbanded in 1923.

## **1940**

The Altmark incident was a naval incident of World War II between British destroyers and the German tanker Altmark,

which happened on 16–17 February 1940. It took place in what were, at that time, neutral Norwegian waters. On board the Altmark were some 300 allied prisoners (officially internees), whose ships were sunk by the pocket battleship Graf Spee in the Southern Atlantic Ocean. British naval forces cornered the tanker and later the destroyer Cossack attacked the German ship near the Jossingfjord and freed all the prisoners, killing eight German seamen with firearms and wounding ten others, five of them seriously. A British and a Norwegian sailor were also seriously wounded in the action. Germany claimed that the attack was a grave violation of international law and of Norwegian neutrality. Norway protests to Britain over violation of neutrality.

## 1941

Off Ireland, U-101 sinks British freighter Gairsoppa (85 killed) carrying 2800 bars of silver to fund war (110 tons of silver were recovered in 2011).

Franciscan Fr. Maximilian Kolbe was arrested by Germans in Niepokalanów. He was first sent to Pawiak prison in Warsaw and then to Auschwitz, where he finally sacrificed his life - volunteered to replace another prisoner sentenced to starvation death.

## 1942

German vessel disguised as a British merchantman is reported sunk by a U-boat off Azores.

First Seabees arrive in the Pacific, on Bora Bora in American Samoa to build an airfield.

In Singapore, Japanese send 3,000 British civilians to



Changi prison and 50,000 British, Australian, and Indian POWs to Selarang Barracks.

Japanese invade Bali, despite allied naval interception and bomb Darwin on Northern Australia.



Source gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque nationale de France

**Wounded British soldiers being evacuated on a trench railway during the fighting on the Somme in 1916.**

**1943**

The Eighth Army occupies Medenine in southern Tunisia. 5th Panzerarmee's advance beyond the Kasserine Pass is temporarily suspended.

In Tunisia, US evacuates Fériana & Thélepte Airfields; Germans occupy the airfields and the towns of Sbeitla and Kasserine.

Baseball player Joe DiMaggio of the New York Yankees

enlists in the US Army.

Aircraft carrier USS Lexington (CV-16) is commissioned at Quincy, MA.

## 1944

**38 (Irish) Brigade.** 1st Bn LIR at Anzio: "At 0700 hrs, 168 Brigade moved to occupy a reserve position west of the Anzio-Albano Rd in flat country below Buonriposa Ridge & about 4 miles from the sea. It was interspersed with wadis and ditches which were very deep and steep...

German troops encircled in the Cherkassy pocket achieve a breakout, but at a heavy cost in men and equipment. The Russians claim the annihilation of the trapped German divisions at Korsun. They also begin to storm Krivoi Rog. US Army & Marines land on Eniwetok Atoll in Marshalls. Operation Hailstone begins as U.S. carrier-based planes bomb the Japanese naval base at Truk in the Caroline Islands.

## 1945

Corvette HMS Bluebell was torpedoed and sunk by German submarine U-711 off Murmansk. Only one man survived from her complement of 86. (See today's veterans below)

The U.S. Third Army launches a new offensive into Germany, having pierced the Siegfried Line on an 11-mile front.

U.S. troops capture the whole of the Bataan Peninsula, which commands Manila Bay in Philippines.

Gen. MacArthur's troops land on Corregidor in the Philippines.

For the second day in a row, carriers of US Fifth Fleet hit Tokyo.



# Roll of Honour – February 17

*Representing their comrades who died on this day*

**1915**

**+ENNIS, David**

Royal Irish Rifles, 2nd Btn. Rifleman. 8238. Died 17/02/1915. Age 26. Son of Elizabeth Ennis, of 36, Constance St., Albert Bridge, Belfast. Kemmel Chateau Military Cemetery, Belgium

**+SLAVIN, Patrick John**

Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers. 2nd Btn. Private. 4323. Died 17/02/1915. Age 18 years old. Son of Patrick and Mary Slavin, of Coolcran, Tempo, Co. Fermanagh. Boulogne Eastern Cemetery, France

**1916**



**+CONLON, Thomas**

Royal Irish Fusiliers, 10th Btn. Private. 22639. Died 17/02/1916. Aged 17. Son of Robert and Margaret Conlon of

Ballyworkan, Portadown.. He was born in Benburb about 1899. The 1911 census shows Thomas as a 14 year old labourer. He was living with the family at Mourneview Street in Portadown. He enlisted in Portadown. Loughgall Old Cemetery. Portadown WM

**+ORR, David**

Royal Irish Rifles, 12th Btn. (Central Antrim Volunteers) Rifleman. 12/19161. Died 17/02/1916 of heart failure and tuberculosis in the Royal Victoria Hospital. Age 18. Born Ballymena. Son of William and Annie Orr. Annie Orr died in 1907. Prior to enlistment he was employee with the Midland Railway Company. He was also a member of the Harryville Unionist Club and C (Harryville) Company of the Ulster Volunteer Force. Whilst serving at the front David Orr was taken ill and was evacuated to England and underwent treatment at 4th London General Hospital and at the Wallace Field Convalescent Home, Croydon. David Orr's condition improved and he was transferred to Victoria barracks, Belfast where his condition deteriorated and he passed away on the 17th February. His funeral began from Victoria Barracks on the 19th February and his remains were conveyed by train to Ballymena. Though David Orr did not receive a military funeral there was a large number of the public in attendance. The service was conducted by the Reverend Alfred Hadden, High Kirk Presbyterian Church. Wreaths were sent by his fellow railway employees and the Harryville U.V.F. Company. Ballymena New Cemetery. Ballymena 1914 –1918 WM. High Kirk Presbyterian Church, Ballymena,WM



**Zeebrugge Churchyard on the Belgian coast contains 205 WW1 burials, 175 German and 30 Commonwealth burials.**

**1917**

**+BAIRD, John Cleland**

Royal Irish Rifles, 14th Btn. Rifleman. 14/17166. Died 17/02/1917. Age 22. Son of James and Sarah Baird, of Belfast. His brother, Serjt. S. Baird, of the 2nd Btn., is buried in Hyde Park Corner (Royal Berks) Cemetery.). Royal Berks Cemetery Extension, Belgium

**+COWAN, William John**

RNR. AB. 5266B. HMT Hawk. Age 31 Killed in action with submarine 17/02/1917. Aged 31. Son of Thomas and

Margaret Cowan, Parkmount Street, Belfast. Portsmouth Naval Memorial

**+HAMILTON, Daniel**

RND, Royal Marine Light Infantry, 1st Royal Marine Btn. Private. PLY/16877. Died 17/02/1917. He enlisted in Belfast on 13/08/1914. He was a labourer and he was born in Galgorm Street, Ballymena on the 28/10/1894. The family were still there in 1901 but were living in Shankill, Belfast by 1911. His sister, Mrs. Maggie S. Quigg, lived at 128 Sugarfield St., Belfast, and later at 28 Kendal St. Belfast. One of his brothers, John Steen Hamilton, died while serving with 3rd Bn. Canadian Infantry. Queens Cemetery, Bucquoy, France.

**+HUTTON, Millar**

Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers. 10th Btn. Private. 15628. Died 17/02/1917. Age 21. Son of Essie Hutton, of Stone Row, Upper Coleraine. Bailleul Communal Cemetery Extension, Nord, France

**+McCOLL, Malcolm**

Royal Irish Rifles, 14th Btn. Rifleman. 4670. Died 17/02/1917. Age 21. Son of John and Sarah McColl, of Rose Cottage, Finaghy, Belfast. Berks Cemetery Extension, Belgium.

**+McGREGOR, J**

Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers. 10th Btn. Lance Corporal. 15847. Died 17/02/1917. Age 31. Son of Thomas McGregor, of Barrack St., Londonderry; husband of Maggie McGregor, of 3, Barrack St., Londonderry. Berks Cemetery Extension, Belgium



## Zeebrugge Churchyard

**1918**

### **+BAXTER, Samuel**

RNR. Seaman. 1319C. HMS Wellington. Also served in HMT Star of the East. Died Plymouth Hospital 17/02/1918. Aged 38. Husband of Bridget Baxter, Portland St., Larne Harbour, Larne. Ford Park Cemetery, Plymouth. Larne WM

### **+McLAUGHLIN, J**

Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers. 1st Btn. Private. 30900. Died 17/02/1918. Age 23. Son of Edward McLaughlin, of Dunboe, Coleraine. Grand-Seraucourt British Cemetery, Aisne, France



**1919**

**+PARKHILL, James**

Royal Irish Rifles, 12th Btn. Rifleman. 12/864. Died 17/02/1919. Age 31. Born on 09/12/1887 in Roddenfort, Ballymoney. Son of Robert and Christina Parkhill (nee Munroe) who were married in 1887 in Greenock, Scotland. The Parkhill family lived at 2 Wilson's Row and later in Castle Street, Ballycastle. They had five children. James Parkhill worked as a labourer and was employed for a time by J. Fulton in Armoy. James Parkhill and Mary McMullan were married on 11/11/1908 in Ramoan C of I Parish Church (St James) in Ballycastle and they had one child, a daughter named Christina who was born on 30/10/ 1909. Christina's mother, Mary, had been in labour for two days and she died in childbirth in Ballycastle Workhouse Infirmary on 30/10/1909 (aged 22). Christina Parkhill lived with her paternal grandparents, Robert and Christina Parkhill, in Ballycastle. James Parkhill enlisted in Belfast on 12/10/1914. He joined the 12<sup>th</sup> Btn Royal Irish Rifles and was then posted to the 18<sup>th</sup> Btn. On 19 July 1916 he went to France to the Base Depot, and he went to the fighting line with the 9<sup>th</sup> Btn in 107<sup>th</sup> Brigade of the 36<sup>th</sup> (Ulster) Division. James Parkhill returned to the Base Depot on 12/10/1916, and he went to the 18<sup>th</sup> Battalion on 31 October 1916. He went back to France on 505/02/1917 with the 12<sup>th</sup> Battalion and on 22/03/1917 he sustained serious gun-shot wounds – a compound fracture of the tibia and fibula in his right leg and flesh wounds in his left leg and chest. He was taken to a Casualty Clearing Station (CCS) and from there he was transported to York Military Hospital on 10/04/1917. He stayed there until 12 November 1917 and on 13/11/1917 he was discharged from the Army when he was deemed to be



no longer physically fit for active service. In November 1917 James Parkhill returned to Newtownards to live with his wife Margaret.

James Parkhill (a widower recorded as a bachelor in civil registration records) and Margaret Stritch (nee Beattie) were married on 11/02/1916 in Newtownards Parish Church of Ireland Church (St Mark's). Margaret Stritch, a widow, lived at 1 Mary Street and later in Circular Road, Newtownards. Mary Stritch (nee Beattie) had previously been married to Patrick Stritch. They were married on 09/12/1904 in Dublin Roman Catholic Pro Cathedral. Rifleman James Parkhill died of pneumonia in Newtownards Hospital. During the war, James Parkhill's brother Joseph also served with the 12<sup>th</sup> Btn Royal Irish Rifles (No. 1779), and he was killed in action on 01/07/1916. Joseph Parkhill is commemorated on the Thiepval Memorial in France; in Ramoan Parish Church of Ireland Church (St James) Ballycastle. James Parkhill's grave is in Movilla Cemetery, Newtownards

## 1940

### **+THOMPSON, Thomas Martin**

RAF. Leading Aircraftman. 525225. Died 17/02/1940. Born 09/01/1915, he was the son of William John Thompson of Killyleagh, Co. Down. Bienvillers Military Cemetery, Pas-de-Calais, France. Killyleagh WM

## 1942

### **+CUNNINGHAM, Isaac Henry**

RAFVR. Sergeant. 1072712. Died 17/02/1942. Aged 21.

Family memorial states he was killed in Normandy. Son of Isaac and Margaret Cunningham of Burren. Warrenpoint. Clonallan Church of Ireland Churchyard

**+KINNIN, John Calvert**

Royal Ulster Rifles, 2nd Btn. Corporal. 7012389. Died as a result of an accident 17/02/1942 at a military hospital in Aylesbury. Age 27. He was the son of Isaac and Emily Kinnin of 9 Jameson Street, Belfast. A joint funeral service took place for John and his father Isaac Kinnin. The Belfast Telegraph newspaper on 24/02/1942 reported that Isaac Kinnin died at Belfast City Hospital on 21/02/1942. His cause of death was a result of the effects of the Belfast Blitz of 1941. Carnmoney Cemetery, St Jude's Parish Church, Ormeau Rd., WM

**+McKEE, Albert**

RAAF. Aircraftman 2nd Class. 1123750. Died 17/02/1942. Aged 30. 450 (R.A.A.F.) Sqdn. Son of James and Frances Maria McKee, of Newtownstewart, Co. Tyrone. Halfaya Sollum War Cemetery, Egypt. QUB WM

**1943**

**+BAYNE, Alan Miller Cameron**

RN. Petty Officer Airman. FX76845. FAA, 754 Squadron. Died 17/02/1943. Age 23. FAA 754 Squadron was based at HMS Condor, a Royal Naval Air Station, at Arbroath. Died in an air crash along with Petty Officer Airman Allen. Son of William James Bayne, and of Selina Bayne, of Tinwald, Canterbury, New Zealand, and formerly of Tamlaghtmore, Moneymore. Cookstown New Cemetery. First Cookstown

PCI - RH. Cookstown WM.

## 1944

### **+WILLIAMS, Alfred**

Royal Artillery. Lance Bombardier. 3908033. Died 17/02/1944. Aged 30. 312 Bty., 90 Lt. A.A. Regt. Son of William E. and Mary Ellen Williams; husband to Annie Josephine Williams, of Londonderry. Anzio War Cemetery, Italy

## 1946

### **+STERLING, Henry (Harry)**

RAFVR. Aircraftman 2nd Class. 1906810. Died 17/02/1946 at Walsall General Hospital. Aged 20. Son of Thomas and Sarah Sterling of 11 Matchett Street, Belfast. Belfast City Cemetery, Glenalina Section

## VETERANS

### **HOBSON, Robert Kennedy**

Major Robert Kennedy Hobson (known as Ken) was born at 461 Falls Road, Belfast on 23/11/1908 to John Hobson, Railway Claims Clerk and Mary Hobson nee Hamilton. In 1911, Robert (2) was living in house 461 Falls Road, Belfast with his mother and 2 siblings; Honor (6) and John (4).

Following his education, Hobson joined the Ulster bank on 30/03/1927 at Head Office.

In 1941, Hobson volunteered and enlisted into the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers and went to India to the Officers' Training School. He obtained a Commission in the Indian Army and attained the rank of Major. He commanded the first Air Support Company in the world, with a strength of 700, and subsequently was made a Member of the Order of the British Empire (MBE - Military Division)

On demobilisation, Hobson returned to the bank in 1946 and was posted to Lisburn Road branch as Accountant. Transfers followed to Shaftesbury Square (1954 - Teller then 1957 - Pro-Manager) and University Road (1962 - Manager). He married Miss Pauline Pearl Hobson, a former official of the Bank of Ireland. They had 2 girls.

'The Ulster Bank Story' by Lyn Gallagher features a Ken Hobson on pages 257 and 259 in an article on 'Ulster Bank at Leisure'. Hobson took part in a comedy routine with his colleague Sammy Walker.

Ken Hobson retired on 30th March 1972. The Belfast City Council website records him dying on 17/02/1991 at 65 Springfield Road, Bangor at the age of 82. His remains were interred at Dundonald Cemetery.

## **JENNINGS, Frederick**

RAF. Leading aircraftman. Served as a radar technician with 320 (Netherlands) Squadron. Frederick Jennings, aged 90, was one of 31 veterans of D-Day from N Ireland, who were presented with The Legion d'Honneur at Thiepval Barracks in Lisburn, on 17/02/2016 (Belfast Telegraph).

320 (Netherlands) Squadron operated over France before and after the D-Day landings. Part of the main body of the squadron was transported in a tank landing ship to beach near Dunkirk a few weeks after D-Day.

Recalling his service, Frederick said, "Well I was in a RAF squadron, operated from France, Belgium, Holland and Germany. Part of the tactical airforce, we used to bomb the Germans frequently, mainly miss them.

"It was a Dutch squadron, They were short of people so the RAF lent them people like me.

"I joined the air force in 1943 and after leaving radar school I went straight to 320 squadron till the war finished and then for my sins I was transferred to India.

"It's very difficult in that my memories are more detached, you never came face-to-face with a German in an aeroplane. It was all very distant, but it was well organised unlike some of the things that went wrong.

"The particular squadron I was on was very good, the aircraft were extremely reliable.

"Very, very few crashed, the bombing was reasonably accurate and well-planned and organised. On the whole it worked very well."



## **MAIRS, William James Mairs**

Private.19667. 11th (Service) Battalion Royal Irish Rifles (South Antrim Volunteers). William, from Craigs, Cullybackey, embarked for France with an advance party of the battalion on 03/10/1915. He was wounded at the Somme in 1916 and on recovery was transferred to an Area Employment Company of the Labour Corps. Due to the shortage of manpower in 1918, William's Company was transferred to active service with 13th (Service) Battalion Duke of Wellington's (West Riding) Regiment. He remained with this battalion until transferred to Class Z Army Reserve on 17/02/1919.

## **McCLELLAND, Reginald Denis**

On the presentation of the Arctic Star, he recalled, "During a convoy HMS Bluebell (Sunk 17-18/02/1945), which was a frigate, came alongside and the crew were exceptionally talented and they put a supper on for us and it was most enjoyable, but unfortunately on leaving it had gone ahead to sweep for submarines and it was torpedoed, and of the 93 men on board only one survived. So it was very personal having met quite a few of the crew that night before." From Bangor, Co. Down

## **MULLAN, Hugh**

Royal Irish Rifles.12th Btn. Rifleman. Enlisted in the 36th Ulster Division on 26/09/1914. He deployed to France in October 1915 and was wounded on the 01/07/1916. He transferred to the Army Service Corps on the 13/04/1918. He was discharged on the 17/02/1919. Hugh prior to enlistment was employed as a flax doffer and was a member of C Company Ulster Volunteer Force. In the 1911

census the Mullan family lived at 124 Queen Street, Ballymena. Hugh was born on the 21/03/1896 to Thomas and Mary Ann McMullan. Hugh and his father and brothers were members of Cromkill LOL 543. Harryville PCI RH.

### **MURRAY, Thomas**

Rifleman 18/783 12th Royal Irish Rifles. Thomas from Templepatrick, Co. Antrim enlisted in 1915 aged 16. He initially served with 8th and 10th RIR before transferring to 12th in Feb 1918. Saw action at Cambrai and St Quentin. Demobilised Feb 1919.

### **POTTER, Henry John Furniss**

Always known as John, he died aged 93 on 17/02/2019 at the Somme Nursing Home in Belfast.

He was born in Ilkley, Yorkshire, on 4 July 1925. He followed his father, uncles and older brother, David, to Marlborough, and then to Campbell College.

John enlisted, aged 18, in the Royal Artillery in Belfast in 1943 on a University Short Course at Queen's University, Belfast. He served as a Gunner in 25 Training Regiment at Marske-by-Sea on the North Yorkshire coast, training on 5.5" medium guns, before being commissioned in November 1943 from 123 Officer Cadet Training Unit based at Catterick.

Immediately posted to India – the fourth generation of his family to serve there – John arrived by troopship at Bombay (now Mumbai) on Victory-in-Europe (VE) Day on 8 May 1945. On arrival he was attached to the 1st Indian Medium Regiment, equipped with 5.5" guns, whose soldiers were Madrassis. The Regiment had begun embarking for the

invasion of Malaya when the Japanese surrendered and the only element of the Regiment to participate in the landings on the west coast of Malaya was the REME Light Aid Detachment!

John remained with the same Regiment until 1947, subsequently serving in Madras, Secunderabad, Nowshera, Peshawar and in Bihar, by which time partition had led to the creation of Pakistan. On Independence Day, 15 August 1947, John was serving with his Troop in Razmak on the North West Frontier, detached from their Regiment. His Indian soldiers, who were mainly Hindu, were about as far away from home in Madras and as far inside the newly created Pakistan as was possible. Those months in Razmak provided John with the only opportunity during nearly fifty years service to fire in anger, when his Troop engaged the camel gun belonging to the notorious Faqir of Ipi, whilst it was shelling Miram Shah, the administrative headquarters for North Waziristan, on what is now the border between Pakistan and Afghanistan. The target was at the extreme range of the 5.5" guns and involved using 'Super Charge' giving them a range of 18,000 yards.

Meanwhile, whilst John and his Troop were in Razmak, the 1st Indian Medium Regiment had moved to Bihar and the Troop followed, having handed-over its guns to a Pakistani Medium Artillery Troop. He remembered the handover being somewhat acrimonious and John later took a certain malicious pleasure on hearing that the Faqir of Ipi's gun had shelled Razmak a few days later, coving the Pakistani Troop Commander in soot when one of the shells hit the roof of the Officers' Mess!

John's Troop had next to escort a refugee train from Rawalpindi to Amritsar. By then the appalling sectarian slaughter following Partition had almost stopped and the journey was without violent incident. During a break in New Delhi, John attended one of Mahatma Ghandi's prayer meetings in Birla House.

John left India in December 1947 with an abiding admiration for his Madrassi soldiers, who, though not generally regarded as the traditional military backbone of the old Indian Army, had remained loyal to their officers to the last. Along with the Ghurkhas, the Madrassi soldiers could be relied upon to conduct internal security duties without favouring one side or the other.

After serving in 34 Training Regiment in Rhyl, North Wales, and 60 Heavy Anti-Aircraft (HAA) Regiment in Palace Barracks, Holywood, John was posted to 71 HAA Regiment in Fayid, Egypt in June 1952, initially as a Troop Commander in 187 Battery, and then as the Adjutant. He was then responsible for running down the Regiment, leaving a few weeks before its final disbandment, as he had obtained a Competitive Entry to the Army Staff College in Camberley, Surrey, attending the course in 1956.

After Staff College he was a Grade 3 staff officer in Military Operations 5 in the War Office (now the Ministry of Defence), where his branch was responsible for the defence of the UK mainland during the abortive campaign by the IRA in the 1950s. After two years in the War Office he was posted in 1958 to 50 HAA Regiment in Troon, on the west coast of Scotland, followed by being selected as the Brigade Major 1st Artillery Brigade in Dortmund, West Germany, which was equipped with "Corporal" tactical nuclear missiles

and included two US missile battalions under operational control.

From Dortmund, John next moved down the road to Paderborn, where he was a Battery Commander in 24 Missile Regiment, although he commanded a battery of 7.2" howitzers, capable of firing nuclear shells. After commanding a battery, John returned to staff, as the Grade 2 staff officer in the NATO Northern Army Group (NORTHAG), followed then by two years in the Defence Operations Analysis Establishment at West Byfleet in Surrey. From there he returned to BAOR as DAAG Headquarters Rhine Area in Dusseldorf, where he was able to indulge his love of opera by regularly attending the local opera house.

John retired in October 1970, returning home to Northern Ireland. He almost immediately joined the newly formed Ulster Defence Regiment in a full-time capacity, becoming the Adjutant and Operations Officer of the 3rd (County Down) Battalion (3 UDR) based at Ballykinler. For a second time in his career he came under fire when the IRA mortared the camp.

On his retirement from 3 UDR, John was appointed the Regimental Secretary for the UDR, based in Thiepval Barracks, Lisburn, which he did for seven years, finally retiring in January 1992. He then spent the next eight years writing the history of the Ulster Defence Regiment "Testimony to Courage" published in September 2001. This was followed by a second book 'Scarce Heard Amid the Guns' in 2013 about his father's experiences during the First World War.



He was Deputy Lord Lieutenant for Co Down.

**THOMPSON, Alfred Church**

North Irish Horse. Son of Thomas Thompson and Margaret J. Maxwell, Kurin, Garvagh. Thomas died 08/12/1915. Alfred Church died 17/02/1958

# Every day is a Remembrance Day

***We will remember them***

**To return to Home Page - click on Remembrance NI  
masthead.**

**Information about individuals who served - please  
forward to remembrance ni at email below**

[houstonmckelvey@mac.com](mailto:houstonmckelvey@mac.com)

**remembrance ni**

The **remembrance ni** programme is overseen by Very Rev Dr Houston McKelvey OBE, QVRM, TD who served as Chaplain to 102 and 105 Regiments Royal Artillery (TA), as Hon. Chaplain to RNR and as Chaplain to the RBL NI area and the Burma Star Association NI. Dr McKelvey is a Past President of Queen's University Services Club. He may be contacted at [houstonmckelvey@mac.com](mailto:houstonmckelvey@mac.com)

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