

Durrington Cemetery

War Graves



Lest we Forget

World War I



21818 RIFLEMAN

J. FRATER

ROYAL IRISH RIFLES

28TH OCTOBER, 1918 AGE 17

*A Light Is From
Our Household Gone
A Voice We Loved
Is Still*

*Commonwealth War Graves Headstone for Rifleman J. Frater is located in Grave Plot # 315
of Durrington War Graves Cemetery*

John FRATER

John Frater was born around 1901 at Milton of Campsie, which is a small village roughly 10 miles north of Glasgow, Scotland. His parents were William & Margaret Frater.

The 1901 Census for Scotland (before John Frater was born) has his parents listed as William Frater (aged 26, Calico Bleacher) & Margaret Frater (aged 24). Also listed was their daughter Nellie C. Frater (aged 3) & a visitor – Mary Penman (a dressmaker). The family were listed at Thomson Place, Campsie, Scotland.

The 1911 Census for Ireland has John Frater listed as a 9 year old living at Cullybackey Town (Galgorm, Antrim) with his family. His parents were recorded as William Frater (aged 34, Bleacher) & Margaret Frater (aged 33). John's parents had been married for 14 years & had 3 children – all still living. There were 3 children listed with John being the middle child – Nellie (aged 13), John & William Frater (aged 5). All the family were listed as being Presbyterian.

John Frater enlisted at Ballymena & was attached to 4th Battalion, Royal Irish Rifles with a service number of 21818.

The 4th Battalion was an Extra Reserve Battalion that had been formed in August, 1914 at Newtownards. The Battalion moved to Carrickfergus in April, 1915 and on to Newry in April, 1917. The idea of the 4th Battalion was it stayed in the UK and supplied drafts to the Regular Battalions overseas. Training was carried out in 1918 in the Military Camps in the Salisbury Plain area in Wiltshire, England. The 4th Battalion had moved to England in April 1918, going to Larkhill in the Salisbury Plain area in Wiltshire.

From South Wiltshire Coroner's Inquests into death of Riflemen John Frater & James Sterling – courtesy of [Salisbury Inquests](#)

The County Coroner (Mr F H Trethowan) held an inquest on Wednesday evening concerning the deaths of two young riflemen, John Frater, aged 17, and James Stirling, aged 18, of the 4th Royal Irish Rifles, who were killed as a result of an accidental explosion of a bomb on Normanton Downs, near Stonehenge, on Monday.

They were walking over the downs, as it was officially stated they were entitled to do, whilst bombing practise was proceeding, as no red flag was shown at the time. A witness said he saw one of the men kick at "something," which turned out to be a 16lb unexploded bomb, which upon impact exploded and killed both Frater and Stirling.

It was stated by a military officer that the ground is periodically searched for unexploded bombs but no record was kept from which it could be stated definitely that all unexploded bombs had been found.

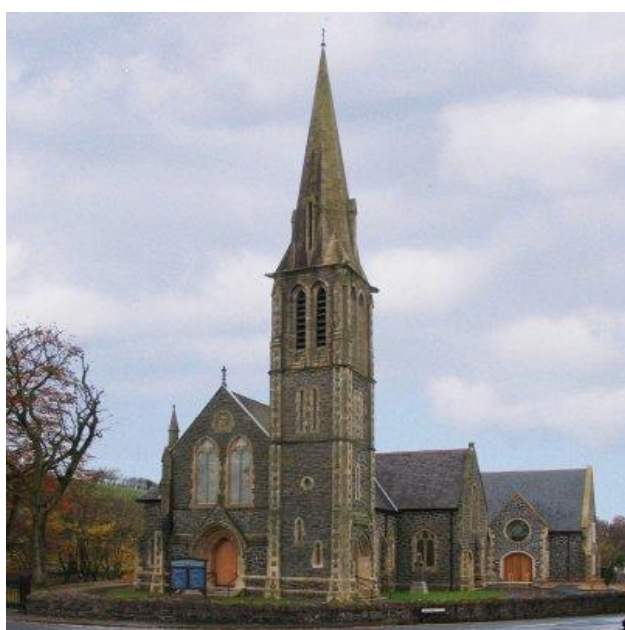
A verdict was recorded that the two men died from injuries caused by the accidental explosion of a bomb, and the military authorities intimated that an enquiry would be held with a view to effecting precautions against the recurrence of similar accidents.

A death for John Frater, aged 17, was registered in the December quarter, 1918 in the district of Amesbury, Wiltshire, England.

Rifleman John Frater was buried in Durrington Cemetery, Wiltshire in Grave /Plot Number 315 on 31st October, 1918. His death is acknowledged by Commonwealth War Graves Commission & as such he has a CWGC headstone with a personal inscription.

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Rifleman John Frater 21818, as having served with 4th Battalion, Royal Irish Rifles. He was the son of William & Margaret Frater of Main St, Cullybackey, Co. Antrim. Born at Milton of Campsie, Glasgow.

Rifleman John Frater is remembered on the Memorial in the Cunningham Memorial Presbyterian Church. (middle section, 3rd name)



Cunningham Memorial Presbyterian Church



(Photo from [Ballymena 1914-1918](#))

Photo of Rifleman J. Frater's Headstone at Durrington Cemetery, Wiltshire



(Photo by Ian King- 2010)