

Sutton Veny

Roll of Honour



Lest we Forget

World War I



CAPTAIN

R. A. COLVIN

ADJT. 2ND BN. THE PRINCE OF WALES'S OWN

(WEST YORKSHIRE REGIMENT)

10TH MARCH, 1915 AGE 25

Robert Alexander COLVIN

Robert Alexander Colvin was born in London on 5th November, 1889 to parents James Colquhoun Colvin & Alice Jane Colvin (nee Hedley). His birth was registered in the district of St. George Hanover Square, London, England in the December quarter of 1889. Robert Alexander Colvin was baptised on 11th December, 1889 at St. Saviour's Church, Pimlico, Middlesex. James Colquhoun's profession was listed as a "Gentleman" in the Baptism Register.

Robert's parents had married on 30th August, 1887 at St. Saviour's Church, Pimlico, Middlesex. Their marriage was registered in the September quarter, 1887 in the district of St. George Hanover Square, London, England. James Colquhoun Colvin was recorded on the Marriage Register as a 53 year old, Widower, Gentleman & Alice Jane Hedley was listed as a 34 year old, spinster.

The 1891 England Census recorded Robert Alexander Colvin as a 1 year old Living at Manor House, Rampisham, Beaminster, West Dorset. His parents were not listed but he was listed with 6 female Servants – Cook, Nurse, Parlour Maid, Housemaid (2) & Kitchen Maid.

The 1901 England Census recorded Robert Colvin as an 11 year old pupil at Durnford House, Langton Matravers, Dorset. The School Master was Thomas Pellatt. Robert Colvin's mother - Alice J. Colvin (married, aged 47) was living at Boyton Manor, Wiltshire with her daughter – Madeline Colvin (aged 8) & 5 female servants in the 1901 Census.

The 1903 Kelly's Directory listed James Colquhoun Colvin living at Boyton Manor, Wiltshire.

Robert Alexander Colvin attended Winchester College located in Hampshire from years 1902 to 1908. He was appointed a House Prefect in his last year, played in Commoner XV and rowed in School IV. He was an enthusiastic sportsman and a keen member of Glee Club.

In 1908 Robert Alexander Colvin passed into Royal Military Academy at Sandhurst in Surrey. He obtained his commission in September, 1909 & became Lieutenant in July, 1910.

The 1911 England Census recorded Robert Colvin's parents living at The Rectory, Sutton Veny, Wiltshire which consisted of 21 rooms. Robert's parents were listed as James Colquhoun Colvin (Bengal Civil Service, Retired on Pension, aged 76, Born at Sea) & Alice Jane Colvin (aged 57, born Brighton, Sussex). Robert's parents had been married for 23 years & had 2 children, both still living. Also listed on this Census was James & Alice's daughter – Madeline Elizabeth Colvin (aged 18, born London) & their granddaughter – Katharine Camilla Colvin (aged 6, born Simla, India). Also listed were 7 female servants – whose titles included Ladies Maid, Cook, Parlour Maid, Nurse, Housemaid, House Parlour Maid & Kitchen Maid.

The 1911 Kelly's Directory for Sutton Veny listed James Colquhoun Colvin as a Private Resident living at the Rectory, Sutton Veny.

Robert Alexander Colvin was appointed Adjutant of 2nd Battalion West Yorkshire Regiment in August, 1913, when it formed part of the international force detailed to occupy Scutari, Albania in 1913-1914. He remained Adjutant after the outbreak of war & proceeded to France for active service. In November, 1914 he received his promotion to Captain and was mentioned in one of Lord French's early Despatches.

James Colquhoun Colvin, of the Manor House, Sutton Veny, died on 4th November, 1914, aged 80 years. Probate was granted in London of 19th February, 1915 to Arthur Edward Newton land agent the attorney of James Morris Colquhoun Colvin V.C. Major R.E. Effects £18., 822 3s. 4d. James Colquhoun Colvin had been baptised in India. James Colquhoun Colvin was buried in Churchyard of Sts. Peter and Paul Church, Heytesbury, Wiltshire.

Captain Robert Alexander Colvin was killed in action on 10th March, 1915, aged 25 years at Neuve Chapelle. He was the only Officer of the Battalion to die that day.

2nd Battalion The Prince of Wales's Own (West Yorkshire Regiment)

2nd Battalion, West Yorkshire Regiment (Prince of Wales's Own) was in Malta in August 1914 when war broke out, they returned to England landing at Southampton on the 25th of September to join 23rd Brigade, 8th Division at Hursley Park near Winchester. After training they proceeded to France landing at Le Havre on the 5th of November 1914, a much needed reinforcement to the British Expeditionary Force.

The 2nd Battalion served in the trenches and rest areas until the Battle of Neuve Chapelle. This was to be the first set-piece battle of the war in which the British were to attack. Neuve Chapelle was a village that the Germans had turned into a strong point with supporting trenches in front, through and behind the village.

On 10th March, 1915, at 7.30 a.m. British artillery began to bombard the German positions. 2nd Battalion had one Company in the front line of the attack and three Companies as Brigade Reserve. The German artillery reply was weak but considerable rifle fire was opened on the British lines. At 8.05 a.m. the British infantry attacked; in ten minutes the 25th Brigade on the right of the West Yorkshires' brigade had taken the German first line trenches, but the attacking Battalion of 23rd Brigade came under heavy fire and were unable to achieve their objectives. As a result a gap opened up between the two Brigades and 2nd Battalion was sent from 23rd Brigade reserve to link the two sets of attacking infantry. As the Battalion moved into the original British forward trenches it was caught by German artillery fire and had many casualties. About 9.40 a.m. half the Battalion was sent forward to lend assistance. At 11.15 a.m. 25th Brigade had taken the village and the 23rd Brigade was ordered to take its objectives "at all costs". At 11.45 a.m. the two remaining Companies of 2nd West Yorkshire Regiment were ordered to prepare to advance against German troops holding up 23rd Brigade's advance. The attack was made at 12.15 p.m. and was successful, although communications failed and British artillery shelled the old German position with men of 2nd Battalion therein, causing a few casualties and causing a withdrawal from the position. *(Information on 10th March from [The Prince of Wales' Own Regiment of Yorkshire](#))*

Early on the morning of the 10th March, 1915, the first day of the advance at Neuve Chapelle, while his Battalion was in reserve, the Major Commanding and Captain Colvin went with two companies to capture a house and orchard which were very tenaciously held by the enemy. They took the position with a rush, but while his Commanding Officer and himself were arranging about its defence he was shot through the head and killed. *(Information from British Army Bond of Sacrifice: Officer Died in Great War)*

Probate details – "Colvin, Robert Alexander of the Manor House, Sutton Veny, Wiltshire. Captain 1st Battalion West Yorkshire Regiment, died 10 March, 1915 at Neuve Chapelle, France. Administration - London 21 April to Madeline Elizabeth Atwood (wife of George Evelyn Laverton Atwood). Effects £7,045 11s. 8d. (* Madeline Atwood was the sister of Robert Alexander Colvin)

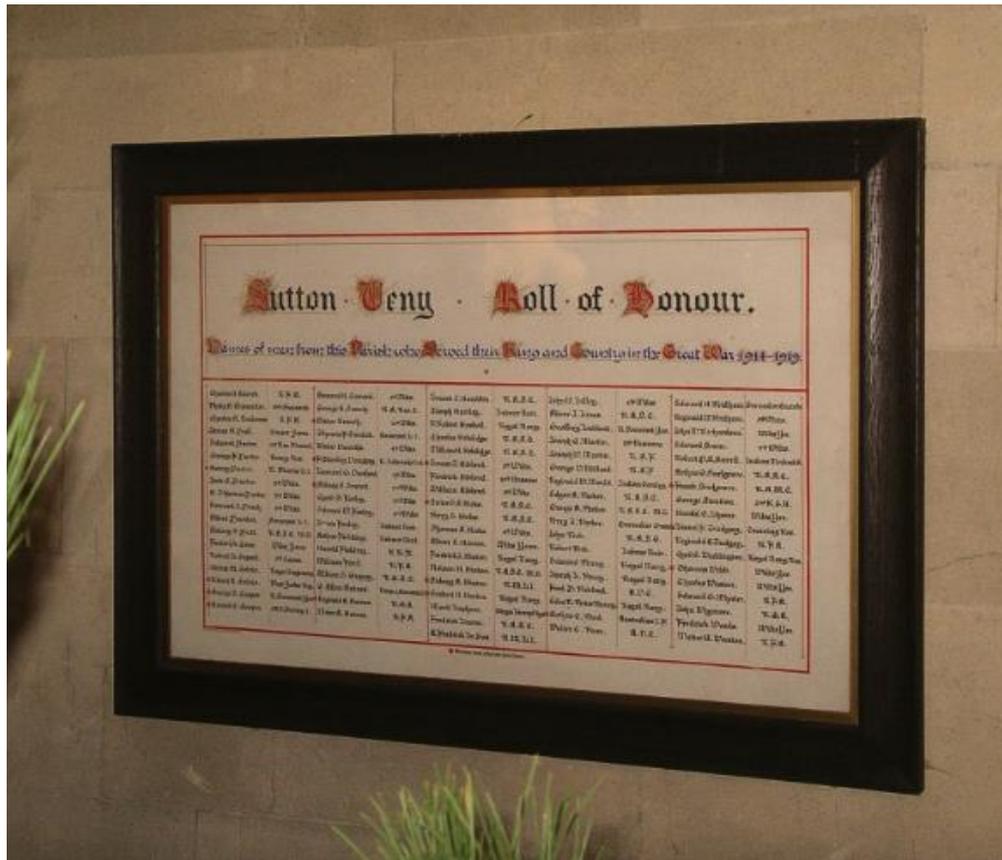
Captain Robert Alexander Colvin is buried in Guards Cemetery, Windy Corner, Cuinchy, France – Grave No. VIII. F. 37. His death is acknowledged by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Captain Robert Alexander Colvin as being the son of James Colquhoun Colvin and Alice Jane Colvin of Sutton Veny, Wilts.

Captain Robert Alexander Colvin was entitled to the British War & Victory Medals.

R. A. Colvin is honoured in the Casualties of World War 1 Diocese of Salisbury Memorial Book for the parish of Sutton Veny.

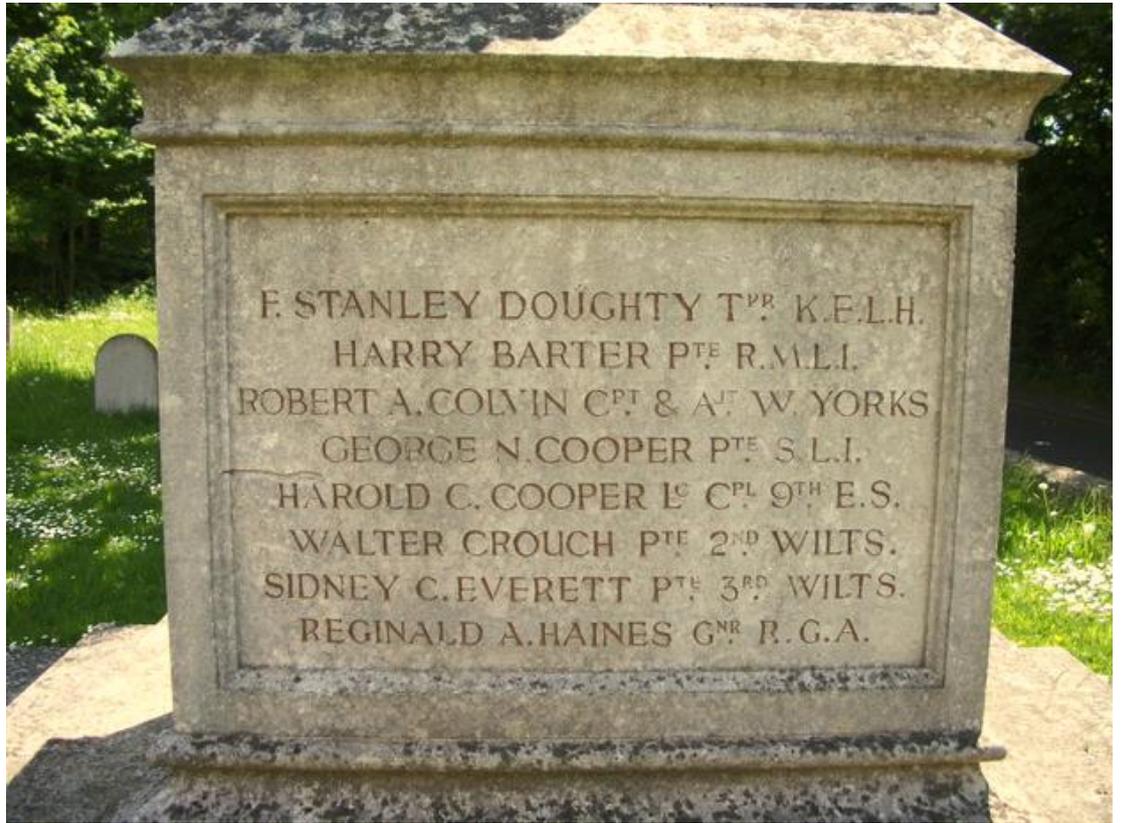
Robert A. Colvin is remembered on the 1914 -1919 Roll of Honour located inside St. John the Evangelist Church at Sutton Veny, Wiltshire.



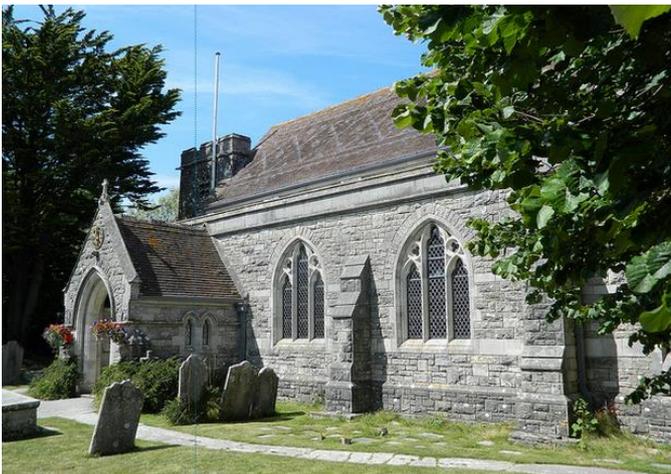
Robert A. Colvin is also remembered on the Sutton Veny War Memorial located in the foreground of St. John the Evangelist churchyard.



Sutton Veny War Memorial (Photos courtesy of Andrea Charlesworth)

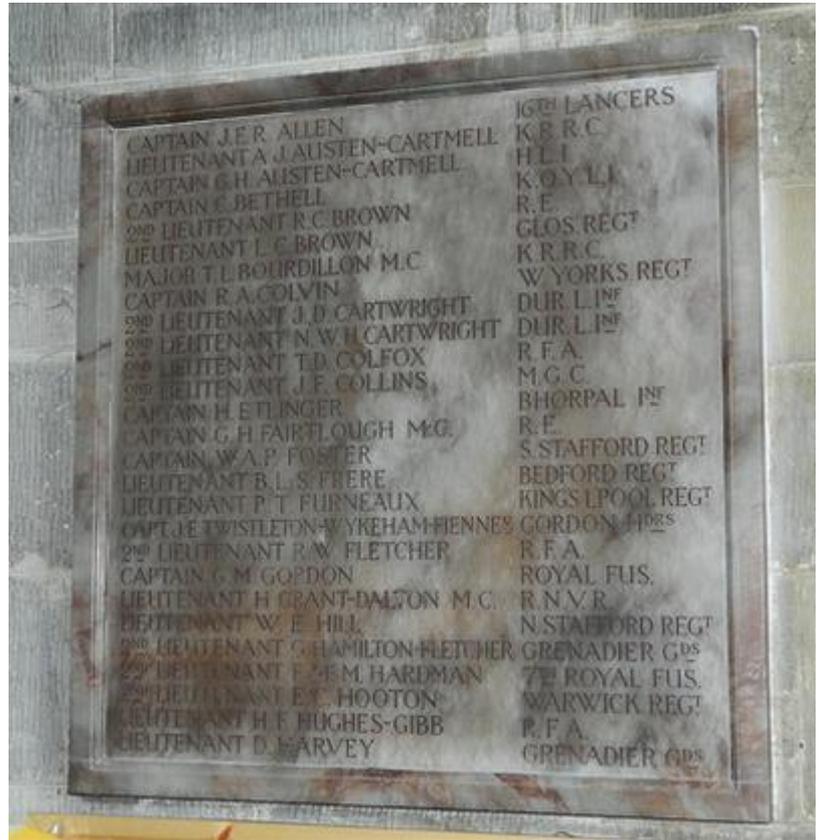


Captain R. A. Colvin is also remembered on the Durnford School War Memorial located in Church of St. George, Langton Matravers, Dorset.



Church of St. George, Langton Matravers & Durnford School War Memorial

(Photos by Michael Day)



Robert Alexander Colvin is remembered on the Winchester College War Cloisters – Outer C2.



Winchester College War Cloister

Captain Robert Alexander Colvin is also remembered on the grave of his parents' located in Churchyard of Sts. Peter and Paul Church, Heytesbury, Wiltshire. James Colquhoun Colvin died 4th November, 1914 & Alice Jane Colvin died 28th October, 1921.



(Photos courtesy of David Milborrow)



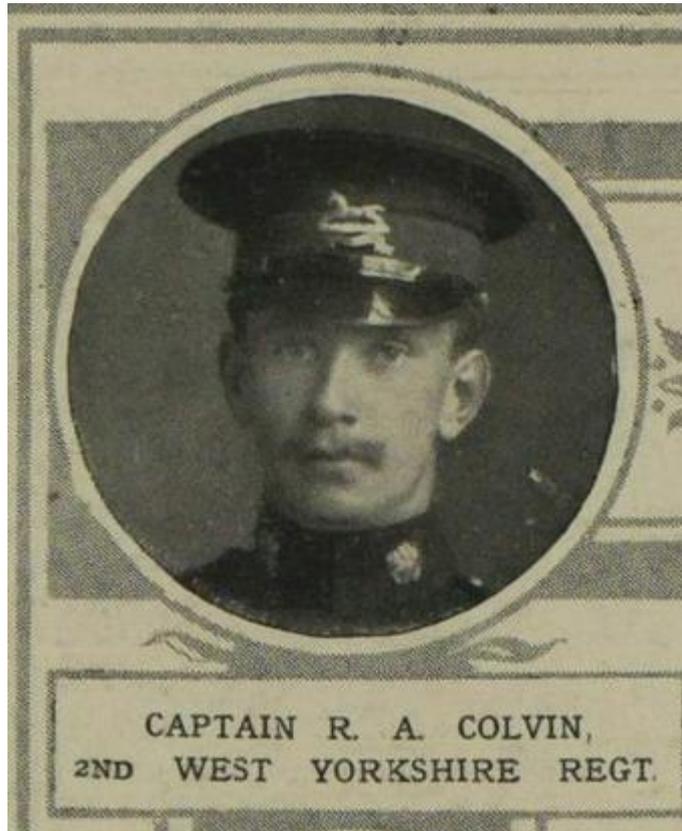
Inscription on Grave at Heytesbury Churchyard relating to Robert Alexander Colvin

Nearer My God To Thee

Also Their Son Capt. Robert Alexander Colvin

Sacred To The Memory Of

West Yorkshire Regt. Killed in Action at Neuve Chapelle, March 10th 1915. Aged 25.



Dead on the Field of Honor: Officers Killed In Action

(The Illustrated London News – April 10, 1915)



Guards Cemetery, Windy Corner, Cuinchy, France

Cuinchy is a village about 7 kms east of the town of Bethune and north of the N41 which runs between Bethune and La Bassee. About 1 km north-west of the village are cross roads known as Windy Corner, and Guards Cemetery is a little west of these cross roads.

A little west of the crossroads known to the army as 'Windy Corner' was a house used as a Battalion Headquarters and dressing station. The cemetery grew up beside this house.

The original cemetery is now Plots I and II and Rows A to S of Plot III. It was begun by the 2nd Division in January 1915, and used extensively by the 4th (Guards) Brigade in and after February. It was closed at the end of May 1916, when it contained 681 graves. After the Armistice it was increased when more than 2,700 graves were brought in from the neighbouring battlefields - in particular the battlefields of Neuve-Chapelle, the Aubers Ridge and Festubert - and from certain smaller cemeteries, including:-

BALUCHI ROAD CEMETERY, NEUVE-CHAPELLE, on the road from Pont-Logy to the "Moated Grange". It contained the graves of fifteen soldiers from the United Kingdom who fell in the winter of 1914-15.

EDWARD ROAD CEMETERY No.3, RICHEBOURG-L'AVOUE, on the South side of the Rue des Berceaux, near another "Windy Corner" (Plot I only, which contained the graves of five men of the 1st East Surreys who fell in October 1914).

INDIAN VILLAGE NORTH CEMETERY, FESTUBERT, near the intersection of "Prince's Road" and the front line of early 1915. It contained the graves of fifteen soldiers from the United Kingdom who fell in May and July 1915.

LORGIES COMMUNAL CEMETERY, which contained two British graves of October 1918.

PONT-FIXE SOUTH CEMETERY, CUINCHY, on the West side of "Harley Street" (the road going South from Windy Corner), a little South of the Canal. This was a row of graves stretching Westward behind houses, and contained the bodies of 42 soldiers from the United Kingdom who fell in 1915.

Guards Cemetery now contains 3,444 burials and commemorations of the First World War. 2,198 of the burials are unidentified but there are special memorials to 36 casualties known or believed to be buried among them. Other special memorials commemorate six casualties buried in Indian Village North Cemetery, whose graves were destroyed by shell fire, and five Indian soldiers originally buried in the Guards Cemetery but afterwards cremated in accordance with the requirements of their faith. *(Information & photos from CWGC)*



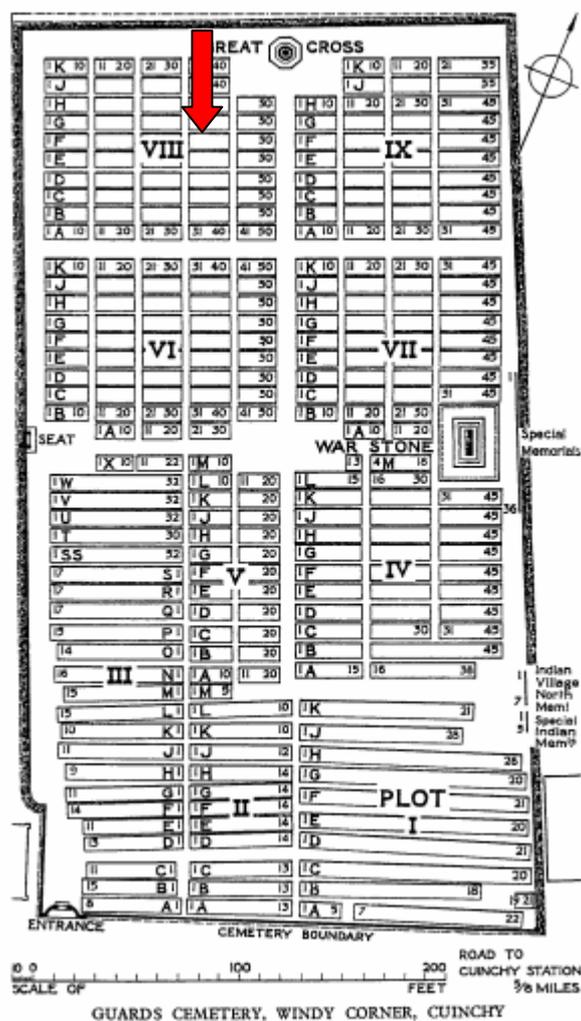


Guards Cemetery, Windy Corner, Cuinchy, France

CWGC Headstone of Captain Robert Alexander Colvin located in Guards Cemetery, Windy Corner, Cuinchy, France.



(Photo courtesy of David Milborrow)



Family Connections

Father

James Colquhoun Colvin was born in 1835 at Sea. He married Camilla Fanny Maria Morris in September, 1868 in Carmarthen, Wales.

Marriage Notice – COLVIN – MORRIS – James Colquhoun Colvin, Esq. Bengal Civil Service, to Camilla F. M., daughter of the late Rev. Edward Morris, at Abergwilly, Camartheshire, Sept. 3 (*Allens's Indian Mail* – Sept. 9, 1868)

James Morris Colquhoun Colvin was born on 26th August, 1870 at Bijnore, India & baptised on 25th September, 1870. James Morris Colquhoun Colvin was the only son of James Colquhoun Colvin & Camilla Fanny Maria Colvin.

Camilla Fanny Maria Colvin died on 9th September, 1870 at Bijnors Outstations. She was buried on 10th September, 1870, cause of death reported as Childbirth.

James Colquhoun Colvin was awarded the India Mutiny medal for his role in the defence of the House of Arrah. The extended family was long established in the British East Indies as soldiers and administrators, and included Sir John Russell Colvin, Lieutenant-Governor of the North-West Provinces during the Indian Mutiny, his sons Sir Auckland, K.C.S.I. and Sir Elliot Graham, K.C.S.I., as well as their cousin, the writer and curator Sir Sidney Colvin.

James Colquhoun Colvin remarried in 1887 to Alice Jane Hedley. Robert Alexander Colvin was born 5th November, 1889 & Madeline Elizabeth was born in June quarter, 1892.

James Colquhoun Colvin died on 4th November, 1914 & was buried in Churchyard at Heytesbury, Wiltshire.

Australian Newspaper Article –

A Hero Of The Mutiny

James Colquhoun Colvin, lately of the Bengal Civil Service, who has died in Wiltshire (England) at the close of his 80th year, was one of the last survivors, if not actually the last, of that heroic episode of the Indian Mutiny, the siege of Arrah.

(*The West Australian*, Perth, WA – Saturday 19 December, 1914)

Sister

Madeline Elizabeth Colvin was born in June quarter, 1892 in London.

Madeline Elizabeth Colvin married in March quarter, 1916 at Portsmouth, Hampshire.

Newspaper Article –

A marriage has been arranged between George E. L. Atwood, R.N., H.M.S. Nemesis, son of the Rev. George H.S. Atwood and Mrs Atwood of Bishopstrow Rectory, Warminster, Wilts and Madeline E. Colvin, only daughter of the late James Colquhoun Colvin and Mrs Colvin of Manor House, Sutton Veny, Wilts.

(*Western Daily Press* – 17 September, 1915)

Half-Brother

James Morris Colquhoun Colvin was born on 26th August, 1870 at Bijnor, India to parents James Colquhoun Colvin & Camilla Fanny Maria Colvin (nee Morris).

Camilla Fanny Maria Colvin died on 9th September, 1870 at Bijnors Outstations. She was buried on 10th September, 1870, cause of death reported as Childbirth.

James Morris Colquhoun Colvin joined the Royal Engineers on 27 July 1889 and served in the Chitral Relief Force in 1895 with the 4th Company, Bengal Sappers and Miners. Colvin was 27 years old, and a lieutenant in the Corps of Royal Engineers, British Army during the Mohmand Campaign, India when the following deed took place for which he was awarded the VC.

On the night of 16/17 September 1897, in the Mohmand Valley, North West British India, Lieutenant Colvin was with Lieutenant Thomas Colclough Watson who collected a party of volunteers and led them into the dark and burning village of Bilot, to try to dislodge the enemy who were inflicting losses on British Army troops. When his brother officer had been incapacitated by wounds, Lieutenant Colvin continued the fight and made two more attempts to clear the enemy from the village. He was conspicuous during the whole night for his devotion to his men, in the most exposed positions and under very heavy fire.

The award of the Victoria Cross was published in the London Gazette on 20 May 1898. The citation read;

Lieutenant James Morris Colquhoun Colvin, Lieut., Royal Engineers. On the same occasion, after Lieutenant Watson had been incapacitated by his wounds from further effort, Lieutenant Colvin continued the fight and

persisted in two more attempts to clear the enemy out of the dark and still burning village. He was conspicuous during the whole night for his devotion to his men in the most exposed positions under a heavy fire from the enemy.

James Morris Colquhoun Colvin married Katharine, youngest daughter of Colonel George Augustus Way, CB and they had three children:

- Katharine Camilla (married Noel Beresford-Peirse)
- James Bazett
- John Alexander, born 9 July 1913

Colonel James Morris Colquhoun Colvin died on 7th December, 1945 at age of 75 at Stanway, Essex. He is remembered on the grave of his father & stepmother located in Churchyard of Sts. Peter and Paul Church, Heytesbury, Wiltshire. James Colquhoun Colvin, his father, died 4th November, 1914.

