

‘A Very Gallant Padre’

**The Reverend Father Simon Stock Knapp, OCD, DSO, MC
Temporary Chaplain to the Forces, 3rd Class
Army Chaplains’ Department**



**By
Barrie H Bertram
20th April, 2012**

**Channel Islands
Great War
Study Group**
www.greatwarci.net



Preamble: This is an account of the life and service of Father Simon Stock Knapp, who became a highly-respected and well-beloved army padre among those that he served with during both the Anglo-Boer (1899-1902) and Great (1914-1919) Wars, irrespective of their ranks.

Readers are asked to note that it has been put together over a brief period of about two months, and as a result:

- It is probably a little rambling due to a number of revisions made as more information emerged
- Some of the information has been contradictory and in some instances it has not yet been possible to verify the accuracy.
- The number of pictures are fewer in number than one would have liked.
- As will be seen, Father Simon went by three names, and it would have been helpful to have bracketed their use in defined periods (1858-1873, 1873-1883 and 1883-1917). This was not possible because of the reference documents.
- Time has not allowed a visit, as yet, to the National Archive at Kew to view his War Office File or the War Diaries of the 1st and 2nd Battalion, the Irish Guards. Doing so may not guarantee further information however.

Notwithstanding these points, it is hoped that in producing this Draft account, it will do justice to a man who served God and his fellow men unselfishly in South Africa, France and Flanders.

Barrie H Bertram

Caton,
Lancashire

20th April, 2012

Introduction: To many of the troops who trudged through Northern France and Flanders, it would seem that every other village's name ended in 'hem', and it was with typically dark 'Tommy' humour, that three areas to the north and west of Poperinghe, which were allocated for the basing of Casualty Clearing Stations (CCS), quickly became known as Bandaghem, Dozinghem, and Mendinghem, with the word play being only too obvious. They were not villages, but their locations are still marked on maps today, sadly by the crosses which indicate that they are Commonwealth War Grave Commission (CWGC) cemeteries. They are the last resting places for those men whose injuries were so severe that it was impossible for the doctors, orderlies and nurses at the CCSs to treat them sufficiently enough to enable them to edge more closely to the French ports, by ambulance, barge or hospital train, for the boat journey back to 'Blighty' and the sophisticated medical facilities that were necessary for a hoped for recovery.

Among those who lie in those cemeteries, there are a small number of Jerseymen. We can find Old Victorian, Captain Stuart Le Geyt Cutler in Dozinghem for example. He was an observer with the Royal Flying Corps, whose flimsy aircraft was most likely brought down by a German scout aircraft in the relentless air war above the Ypres Salient. Private Harold Single lies in nearby Bandaghem. According to a Jersey Evening Post entry it was stated that he had transferred from the Royal Navy to the Wiltshire Regiment. But, it forgot to add that neither the RN nor the Wiltshires knew of this arrangement! A pre-war regular, Corporal Henry De Ste Croix completes the picture. In his case, it appears from the 1911 Census that he was getting his knees brown in Mauritius! However, the war came, and with it a return to the UK from where he would soon head east again, this time to get his knees even browner at Gallipoli. Emerging with his life from that very unsuccessful campaign with his unit, the 2nd Battalion, the Hampshire Regiment and heading off to France and Flanders, he would succumb to injuries at Mendinghem in April, 1918.

But, we return to Dozinghem where, in Plot II.C.1, Chaplain, 3rd Class, the Reverend Simon Stock Knapp, DSO, MC now lies. A highly decorated member of the Army Chaplains' Department, Father Knapp had been the Roman Catholic (RC) Padre to the 2nd Battalion, the Irish Guards, for a period up to the 1st August, 1917 when he died of wounds. During a period of nearly three years, he had been awarded Distinguished Service Order (DSO), the Military Cross (MC), and also had been several times 'Mentioned in Despatches'. He had been commemorated in the Jersey Roll of Honour that was published in late 1919, and the initial assumption was made that he had ministered in Jersey although it was soon discovered there was no evidence to support that, for nothing has been found of an association with the RC Church in Jersey. However, for a number of reasons, effort in researching him had not been expended until February of this year, even though a reference to him in a letter written by Edward, Prince of Wales concerning Kipling's 'My Boy Jack' had been spotted in the Holts' book of that name a few years aback.

What then prompted this sudden flurry of research? It resulted from a talk that was to be given on the role of Army Chaplains at the North Lancashire WFA Branch in early March, 2012 by a former Padre, and it somehow seemed appropriate that one should have known more about the Father Simon and his potential Jersey links, or at least, have known the right questions to ask such that something might be learnt. But, as in many cases of other similar research, the process was convoluted with nothing appearing to be logical initially. However, thanks to a number of people, along with the

'usual' sources, it has been possible to obtain a broad insight into Father Simon's life, and which follows on the next few pages.

The Penny Dropped – Very Slowly: The CWGC Register had been, as is normal, the starting point but neither Father Simon's age was stated nor was there any 'Additional Information' such as his family details. However, it was highly likely that he was in his fifties when he died. Of the three Padres who had been awarded the Victoria Cross (VC) during the Great War, the Reverend Theodore Bayley Hardy, who had also been awarded the DSO and MC, was two days short of his 55th birthday when he had died at Rouen in 1918. Indeed, a Great War Forum contributor noted of Father Simon that: 'He was not far shy of sixty when he died', and if that statement was correct, it indicated that Father Simon was born in 1857 or 1858.

Thus, the name of Simon Knapp, with or without the middle name of Stock, should have been appeared on one or more of the six Censuses from 1861 to 1911, and that some link to Jersey should have been obvious, or so the logic went! But, it was not! However, it was found that he had appeared numerous times in the London Electoral Register between 1896 and 1915, with his address given as 47 Church Street in Kensington. There were also a number of other Reverends shown as living there, and in 1915, for example, these included:

- Alphonsus Brand
- Ambrose Fatcher
- Vincent McGuirk
- Aloysius Jackson
- Columba Casey

Of that list of names, Ambrose Fatcher's was the most familiar, as it had appeared on Father Simon's Medal Index Card (MIC), and it had also shown Ambrose Fatcher's address as 47 Church Street. But then, searching through the Probate Calendar for England and Wales, it was stated that Father Simon's executor was a Reverend William Charles Fatcher. Armed with this new information, was it possible that William and Ambrose were the same man? So it proved when conducting further searches, a number of the London Electoral Registers also showed a William Fatcher living at 47 Church Street! And, on those occasions, at the same address there was a Reverend Francis Knapp!

Given that 'Ambrose = William', it thus seemed logical that 'Simon = Francis', and there was an obvious answer for this. Both had belonged to an order, in their case, the *Ordo Carmelitarum Discalceatorum* (OCD) or the Order of Discalced Carmelites (ODC), within the RC Church where members assumed a saint's name as a means of their being continually reminded of the need for the piety that was shown by 'their' saint. If any doubts had lingered with this conclusion, they were quickly dispelled, thanks, subsequently, to 'googling' 47 Church Street and finding the large Carmelite Church, designed by Sir Giles Scott, adjacent to it. Having replaced an earlier Pugin-designed one that had been wrecked by a German flying bomb in 1944, the present day Church is at the hub of the parish of 'Our Lady of Mount Carmel and St Simon Stock'. Proof positive indeed! The Church is adjoined by a Carmelite Priory, and contact was made with a Father John Hughes who very kindly provided further information and photographs.



**Father Simon Stock Knapp with brother priests at the Carmelite Priory, Kensington in 1896
(Courtesy: The Reverend Father John Hughes OCD)**

(Note: Incidentally, St Simon Stock was a 13th Century English saint, of whom more detail can be found on Wikipedia amongst other sources)

The Missing Link: However, before that contact, it had been necessary for a return visit to the Censuses, this time to look for Francis Knapp, and in so doing, an element of success was achieved. Disregarded during the first search, because there was no Simon listed, there was a family listed as living in the parish of St Lawrence in Jersey at the time of the 1861 Census. In one dwelling in the Rue du Camp (now the western 'half' of La Rue de la Fontaine St Martin) there were as follows:

Teresa Knapp	29 yo	(1832)	Born Ireland
John J Knapp	6 yo	(1855)	Born Ireland
Charles J Knapp	4 yo	(1857)	Born England
Frank Knapp	3 yo	(1858)	Born England
Edward Knapp	1 yo	(1860)	Born St Lawrence, Jersey
Susan Long	52 yo		Born England (shown as a relation)
Mary Hearn	16 yo		Born Ireland (shown as a servant)

Of the boys' father there was no sign, but, in extending the search for Knapp family members to St Helier's Baptisms' Register, we find listed:

3/2628	Charles John Knapp	Bapt.08.02.1860	Born.30.08.1856
3/2629	Frank Knapp	Bapt.08.02.1860	Born.13.04.1858
3/2600	Edward Knapp	Bapt.18.01.1860	Born.09.12.1859

The parents were recorded as Thomas and Tresa (sic) Knapp, while Frank's god-parents were listed as Henry Minors and his wife (Ellen) (later of Minor's Hotel on the Esplanade). Yet oddly, the Register was annotated with a statement that Charles and Frank had been born in St Lawrence, in contradiction of the 'Born in England' Census entries. Frank's birth date was consistent with the 'He was not far shy of sixty when he died' statement, but the argument 'Simon = Francis = Frank' was not proven, although there was a fairly high likelihood of it being correct. Fortunately, confirmation that it was indeed correct came from Father Hughes who cited the same birth-date of 13th April, 1858. However, Father Hughes also advised that Frank had been born in Brighton. Thus, at this stage, Frank's place of birth could not be resolved, not least because no corresponding entries can be found in the UK Births Register to coincide with either the date or location of birth.

What of Thomas and Teresa Knapp? Apart from the 1861 Census and the St Helier Baptisms' Register, all that could be found was that they were married at St Audeon's Church in Dublin by (special?) licence on the 13th February, 1855, and that Thomas' father was John and Teresa's was Martin Davis. At the time of their marriage, they were recorded as aged 23 and 24 respectively, and that their address was shown as 8 Usher's Quay in Dublin. There was no trace of them in the Censuses following that for 1861, and similarly of the four boys, with the exception of Edward, in 1871, when he was living at the same address in Brighton as Susan Long!

Looking through the Censuses, there were two other Knapp 'finds' with links to Jersey, and it was considered possible that they were related to Frank. The first was Terese Knapp, and she was shown in the 1871 Census as 6 years old and at a Convent School in Boreham, Essex, having been born in Jersey. Given the forename and Frank's later calling, one wondered whether it was more than a coincidence. It was also possible that Terese was also Theresa who sadly died in Coventry in the last quarter of 1881 aged just 17 years old.

The second was Ann Knapp who was found listed in the Jersey Censuses for 1841 and 1851, appearing to have been born between 1791 and 1796. If that is correct, she could have been Thomas' mother. Curiously, also listed in Jersey Archive's catalogue, there is the record of a will (Reference: D/Y/A/28/145) for Anne Knapp of St Helier. Dated the 26th February, 1855, it makes bequeaths to the poor, 25 *livres* of Jersey currency, and to the Patriotic Fund for Wives and Orphans of Men who died in the Crimea, a further 100 *livres*. A number of codicils were added, the last being in October of that year. Was Ann's will worth reading?

A Family in Crisis: It was fortuitous timing to have started research into Father Simon's background back in late February, because a trip to Jersey had long been planned for March. So, it became only too convenient to investigate his Island connections further, making use of resources in the Registrar's Office, the Library and the Archive, and to answer the obvious first question of: 'Was he born in St Lawrence?' the Index of Births for that parish, and St Helier for that matter, showed that neither he nor his brother Charles was! But, Edward had been born in St Lawrence, and so had Teresa (Terese, Theresa), who, according to the appropriate Register of Birth entry, proved to be the younger sister of the four boys, having been born in Coin Motier Vingtaine on the 29th September, 1864, and who, we must now strongly suspect, died in Coventry. As to Frank and Charles' place of birth, the St Helier Baptisms' Register is incorrect, for

whatever reason, and we must presume that they had been born in England as stated in the 1861 Census.

Ann Knapp's will was mildly interesting, but only because it appeared that she was leaving everything to everyone, including the kitchen sink! Such and such a person would receive the stair carpet and rods, another, the washstand, and so forth. But, on the important issue of a family connection, nothing could be proven. Indeed, it is highly unlikely that she was Thomas' mother as Knapp seems to have been her maiden name, having stated that her brother had been a Reverend Doctor Knapp, and that his widow was to receive an annual pension of '*douze livres sterling*' from her estate.

We can turn now to Frank's mother, Teresa, and thanks to the Almanacs that were produced by the Jersey Independent, Gosset and the British Press, it was found that a Mrs T Knapp was shown as dwelling as follows:

- Leda Cottage in St Lawrence, 1861 and 1862
- In St Lawrence Valley (?), 1863 to 1865
- Inkerman House, St Lawrence Valley (?), 1866
- Roseville Street, St Helier, 1867 and 1868.

The maps for that period show that there was a Leda House in the Rue du Camp. Therefore, Leda Cottage was either an annex to Leda House, or indeed the House itself wrongly named. However, during the years listed above, neither she nor her husband featured in the *Listes du Rât*. As an aside, with a Crimean connection between Ann Knapp leaving money to widows and orphans of that War, and the family living at Inkerman House, it does prompt an interesting thought. Had Thomas Knapp served there? Or, did the news of the poor conditions experienced by the troops out there serve as an impetus to charitable bequests and the patriotic choice of house name was nothing more than a coincidence?

What had happened to Teresa subsequently was answered when St Lawrence's Index of Deaths showed that she had died sometime between 1867 and 1879, and following this information up, the parish's Register of Deaths records that she had died from Consumption (TB), aged 37 years and 6 months, on the 9th August, 1869 in the Coin de Tourgis Sud Vingtaine.

But, Teresa was a *Veuve* (widow) when she died! For, having discovered an entry for Thomas Knapp in the Burial Records for Almorah Cemetery (Plot 25/23/Z) it was found that he had died at 3 Hampton Place in St Helier, aged 36 years and 11 months, from '*Hydropisie*' (Dropsy) on the 1st February, 1869, and was described on his death certificate as a '*Rentier*' (a person of independent means). In little more than six months, Frank and his siblings were orphaned, and as best as can be judged, there were few family members on the Island in a position to help, with Teresa at the 'ripe old age' of six years in Convent School in Essex, while twelve year old Edward was in Brighton with Susan Long by 1871.

Edward's removal to Brighton lent support to the argument of Frank being born there. But, having returned home, there has been an opportunity to obtain and consult the Reverend David T Youngson's '*Greater Love: A Directory of Chaplains ... who gave their lives in the period 1914-1922*', to find that Frank's birth-place is given as Burgess Hill, which, at 10 miles is clearly quite close to Brighton. This new information provided

an impetus, and searching the 1871 UK Census afresh, we now find 14 year old Charles, also born in Burgess Hill, lodging with the Martin family in Brighton while employed as a Brewer's Clerk. Of Frank and John there is no sign, while any entry in the UK Births' Register remains elusive.

By this stage, it may be that the RC Church provided a home and education for Frank, and in Diane Moore's '*Deo Gratias, A History of the French Catholic Church in Jersey: 1790-2007*' there is some evidence to support this theory. There are several avenues for further research to be explored, and fill the gap between 1869 and 1873 when we next hear of him. For that we can thank the Times of 17th August, 1917, which provided the next clue as it carried his brief obituary in the 'Fallen Officers' column which read as follows:

FATHER SIMON KNAPP, CF, DSO, MC, of the Carmelite Church, Church Street, Kensington, who died on August 1st of wounds received the day before, was attached to the Irish Guards, and had been awarded the DSO and MC. He served in the Boer War with Major Allenby, now General Sir Edmund Allenby, and received the medal with four clasps. He was born in 1858, and after being educated at St Edmund's Catholic College, Ware, he professed in the Carmelite Order in 1878, and became priest in 1883.

The Years 1873 to 1900: So, it was back to school once more to enquire about Frank's time at St Edmund's! Contacting St Edmund's, a response very soon came back, very kindly to be followed by a pack of scanned information that included cuttings from the College magazine, 'The Edmundian'.

Summarising a more detailed history, that is to be found on the College's website (www.stedmundscollege.org), it is of interest to note that St Edmund's is the oldest Catholic College in England. It was founded in 1568 at Douay (now Douai) in French Flanders and was intended to be a seminary whereby priests could be prepared to minister back in England and to keep alive Catholicism in what had become a largely Protestant nation. However, it also provided a Catholic education for boys where it was not possible for them to receive such an education in their own countries. In 1793, the English College, as it had been called, closed at Douay, due to the French Revolution, and would continue from then on in England where the attitude to Catholics had much improved and penal laws against them comparatively less stringent. Now known as St Edmund's, the work has continued to the present day, although the role as a seminary ceased in 1975.

But, back to Frank or to Francis as he was known at St Edmund's. It is slightly amusing to read in his College Obituary that, 'He was a student here in the seventies', when one has also to subtract a century to remind ourselves of the right period! He had attended the College from 1873 at the age of 14, until 1877 when he had left aged 18. There was a comment that he was 'a good student' but one does suspect that, 40 years on, there were few at the College who knew him. However, it does seem that he was an enthusiastic cricketer, and was in the Cricket XI from 1875 to 1877. A flavour of life at St Edmund's can be derived from the following synopsis of a College history that is shortly to be published:

In 1869 the Divines left St Edmund's in order to study in a separate seminary in London..... Liturgical services were continued by priests and schoolboys..... The Church Boys wore surplices in choir..... St Edmund's remained as a school, with both

lay and Church Boys as well as the philosophers – indeed the lovers of cricket had to make do with matches between Church and Lay, and Westminster and Southwark. The lay and Church Boys were reunited and the old lay playroom abolished. Students continued to go forward to seminary but, since Catholics were still forbidden to enter Oxford or Cambridge, many philosophers were prepared for external degrees from the University of London. The College thus continued to fulfil an important role within the Catholic community and to prepare future candidates for the Priesthood. Between 21st July and 12th August, 1873, St Edmund's was the location of the Fourth Provincial Synod of Westminster, a meeting of the English and Welsh Hierarchy and about fifty clergy, presided over by Archbishop Manning.The bishops and senior clergy remained in residence for three weeks.Much to the students' delight, their return to the College after the holidays had to be postponed. The 1870s saw the beginnings of large public pilgrimages from England to the shrines of Catholic Europe. In 1874 a great pilgrimage was made to the shrine of St Edmund at Pontigny. Several hundred pilgrims departed from Victoria on 1st September, including Mgr Patterson and staff and students from the College.

During the period that Francis had attended College the seminary remained in London, not returning to St Edmund's until 1904. At this distance in time, it is difficult to gauge when he first sought to become a Catholic priest, and what were the influences that first encouraged or enabled him, by the time he was 14 years old, to attend St Edmund's. Nevertheless, regardless of his parents marrying in a Protestant Church of Ireland ceremony, and his Baptism conducted in St Helier's Protestant Church, it is possible that there were strong Catholic influences, even going to France or Belgium, which might explain his absence from the Census for 1871.

The College Obituary notes that, 'In 1878 he left St Edmund's to enter the Carmelite order, and, if we may so put, began his wanderings!' To which one might say 'Quelle surprise!', for he had already been somewhat elusive, and would continue to be! As to entering the order, Father Hughes advises us of the following process:

'This is what happens when a man joins a Catholic religious order. Canon law stipulates that everywhere, whenever a young man presents himself as a candidate to a religious Order, whether it is to the Carmelites, the Benedictines or the Jesuits, a date is set for the beginning of the canonical novitiate which is exactly twelve months in duration; after which, if the candidate wishes to continue (and the community approves of him by secret ballot), he is then invited to make his first profession of vows. Unlike some years ago, when Canon law was slightly changed, the vows were made for three years, after which they are renewed until death. So, quite a long time is given before making a life long commitment. Father Simon's name is inscribed (in Latin) upon our obituary boards in the priory, but for some reason there was no mention of the date of his ordination to the priesthood. But it would have been about six years after his first profession.'

Francis left College at the end of 1877, and from there headed off to Lyons where he would make his first profession of vows on the 8th December, 1878. The following year he would return to England, this as a consequence of laws that had been passed against the Carmelite Order in France. But, another UK Census was taken in 1881, and we now find Francis, listed as Frank and having been born in Burgess Hill, living at 47 Church Street in Kensington, and now a Theological Student. However, it would not be too long before he crossed the English Channel once more, this time, heading to Ghent where he was ordained priest in 1883.

Again returning to England, he went to Wincanton to become the sub-prior at a newly opened 'house' there, combining the role with that of master and lecturer in philosophy. There appears to be a mismatch as to the year when this occurred. The College Obituary records that this appointment took place in 1884, however, the Carmelite Priory did not open until 1889. I am inclined to the later date as I could not see a newly ordained priest assuming such a weighty role. In any case, Father Simon, as we shall now call him, developed health problems, and relinquished the position at Wincanton.

It appears that, in subsequent years, that he continued his travels. For a time he was the Chaplain at the Marquis of Bute's Cathedral Church at Rothesay, he then went to the USA, following it up with a year spent at Mount Carmel in Palestine as it was then. Much later, in a letter from General Allenby to his wife, written on the 29th September, 1918, we read that:

*'I went to Haifa and Carmel yesterday. The view from the top of Carmel across the bay is lovely; very like the bay of Naples - without Vesuvius and Capri. The bay is surrounded by mountains except where the River Kishon runs in from the Vale of Esdraelon. **On Carmel is the Carmelite Monastery; where Father Knapp lived, in his youth. I went in. Only 3 monks remain there.** It is a huge building; and, if I shift my GHQ to Haifa, I shall probably use it for my HQ offices. The Germans had done so, and left a lot of litter behind. All the furniture, except in one or two rooms used by the staff, has been removed by them or destroyed. On the highest point on the bluff, which rises steeply to the south of Haifa, is a monument to mark the point where the Kaiser stood, in 1898, to see the view.'*

At this juncture, the College Obituary suggests that: 'he seemed doomed to be a chronic invalid', and later on states that he was: 'doomed to the life of the hypochondriac'. Perhaps, the death of his parents and sister played on his mind as regards to his well-being, given their early ages when they died. Yet, what is striking, despite the fact that he apparently had problems with his health, he was still capable of travelling long distances and would continue to do so in subsequent years, and to be out of the UK when the 1891 Census came around! But there were the London Electoral Registers that indicate that he still had a home to go to in-between journeys.

The Anglo-Boer War: Following President Kruger's declaration of war on the 11th October, 1899, for the second time, the British Empire found itself fighting the Boers in, what is, present day South Africa. Over the next few years, Britain would muster sizeable forces, including men from Australia, Canada and New Zealand. After a number of initial reverses, the British would later apply several strategies, some very harsh, to deal with the Boers Kommandos who would engage British troops when the terrain and opportunity suited them. One of these strategies to counter Boer activity was that of the use of mobile columns that contained the traditional cavalry or the more novel mounted infantry, and in due course, Father Simon would join one of those columns.

In response to a War Office request for more padres, Father Simon would go to South Africa. Thanks to a Times report, we first find him departing from Southampton on the Union-Castle Line's *SS Briton* over the weekend of the 24th/25th March, 1900. His departure did not go unnoticed, for in the Houses of Parliament on the Friday following,

the nationalist Irish Parliamentary Party MP for Kerry, North, Michael Joseph Flavin, asked the First Lord of the Treasury:

'...whether he was aware that Father Simon Knapp a friar of the Carmelite Church at Kensington had volunteered his services as an RC chaplain to the RC soldiers now serving in South Africa; and that he had been appointed by the War Office as a chaplain and sailed in the Briton for South Africa; and, seeing that Father Knapp was a member of a religious community, which under a penal statute was an illegal monastic order, would Her Majesty's Government give facilities for the passage of a Bill now before Parliament; or whether Her Majesty's Government would take such steps as might be necessary to remove the disabilities under which certain RC religious communities were penalised in Great Britain and Ireland.'

Not yet Prime Minister, Arthur Balfour was the First Lord of the Treasury and would reply, but the answer was regarding the Bill's passage, and not Father Simon's sea passage *per se*, replying to the second 'half' of the question, the first 'half' having been raised to make the political point highlighting the contradiction between an individual being a member of an illegal religious order and yet still be considered good enough to provide religious comfort to the troops, all in the name of Her Majesty!

The passage to Cape Town would take some two to three weeks, but after disembarking, we find that before he went up the 'sharp end', he was hospitalised for, referring to the Times again, it was reported that he was discharged from hospital during the week ending the 20th May, 1900. However, lest it be thought that this was a recurrence of his 'hypochondria', he soon was with the men that he would minister to. For this information, we can be guided by Queen's South Africa Medal (QSAM) records which note the five clasps that were awarded for his service:

- A clasp inscribed 'Johannesburg' granted to all troops who, on the 29th May, 1900, were north of an east and west line through Klip River Station (exclusive), and east of a north and south line through Krugersdorp Station (inclusive).
- A clasp inscribed 'Diamond Hill' granted to all troops who, on the 11th or 12th June, 1900, were east of a north and south line drawn through Silverton Siding and north of an east and west line through Vlakfontein.
- A clasp inscribed 'Belfast' granted to all troops who, on the 26th or 27th August, 1900, were east of a north and south line drawn through Wonderfontein (the garrison and troops quartered at Wonderfontein on those dates will not receive this clasp) and West of a north and south line through Dalmanutha Station, and north of an east and west line through Carolina.
- A clasp inscribed 'Cape Colony' granted to all troops in Cape Colony at any time between the 11th October, 1899, and a date to be later fixed, who received no clasp for an action already specified in the Cape Colony nor Natal clasps.
- A clasp inscribed 'Orange Free State' granted to all troops in Orange River Colony at any time between the 28th February, 1900, and a date to be later fixed, who received no clasp which has been already specified for an action in the Orange River Colony.

These dates also seem to indicate that he arrived too late for noted successes such as the Relief of Kimberley and at Paardeburg where Kronje surrendered.

The last two of those clasps seem to be for more general duties rather than specific actions but the others do indicate that Father Simon was moving around with the Army. As to his service in South Africa, more research is required, but it is likely that he was with the 6th (Inniskilling) Dragoons, an Irish regiment. One, soon to be famous, member of that regiment was its temporary CO for a time, Edmund Allenby, a Major who would later rise to Colonel during the campaign against the Boers, and who would take charge of a Column that would carry his name. Another officer, no less famed, serving with the 'Skins' during that period, was Captain Lawrence Oates, the 'Very Gallant Gentleman' of Scott's unsuccessful 1912 Antarctic Expedition.

Father Simon's medal record shows that he had joined the Staff of Allenby's Column however it is unlikely that this did not happen until 1901, for it appears that the Column was not formed until the beginning of that year. But, according to the Times and the London Standard, along with Guernsey VC winner Sergeant George Nurse, he would be on board the *HS Avoca* leaving Cape Town on the 9th December, 1900 and arriving at Southampton on the 31st. Moreover, he was listed as being an Invalid. This appears to contradict his 1901 service, for, he is to be found on the embarkation lists once more, leaving Cape Town onboard the *SS Saxon* on the 9th September, 1901 and arriving in Southampton on the 27th. One can assume that either he actually did not return home on the *Avoca*, or more likely that, after a quick change of clothes, he very promptly headed back to South Africa. Returning to the College Obituary, there is support for the latter argument as it states that he 'signed up' for one year at a time, and was asked to return for another year. Unfortunately, outward-bound officer names were rarely mentioned early in 1901 at least, and at that time the papers were much preoccupied with the death of Queen Victoria which had occurred on the 22nd January.

The College Obituary also notes: 'The open air and the exercise, the weeks of trekking and 'roughing it' generally...', and although the College may not have appreciated the irony of the term 'roughing it', the time spent with Allenby's Column could have done Father Simon the power of good in terms of his health. The Columns, including those led by Haig, Smith-Dorrien and Plumer, were given the thankless task, by Kitchener, of 'hustling Boers'. Thomas Pakenham, in his superb book: 'The Boer War', highlights Allenby's disenchantment, and tells of the endless rainstorms at the end of March, 1901 that nearly marooned the Column near Swaziland, with floods breaking the telegraph lines, convoys towed by oxen that were unable to cross flooded rivers and men sleeping in the quagmires that resulted. Food, in the shape of mealies (or maize), had to be obtained from the Swazi tribesmen. Perhaps, during this period, Father Simon's presence proved to be a considerable help to all in terms of their morale, not least Allenby who as has already been noted, had very clear recollections of Father Simon nearly twenty years later, and who returned exhausted and ill from the trek.

One is curious as to how Father Simon travelled at this time. Did he ride and was he given a horse? Or was it simply a case of hitching a lift on the Quartermaster's wagons? Meanwhile, in addition to his QSAM, recognition of his service came in the shape of a Mention in Despatches (London Gazette (LG) No. 27353 dated 10th September, 1901) and on the 13th November, 1902, he would be among the RC worshippers gathered at the Brompton Oratory to remember the fallen from the Anglo-Boer War.

The Years between the Wars: We almost lose sight of Father Simon following the service at Brompton, and before the outbreak of war in 1914, but according to the College Obituary, much of this time was spent in Spain. The suggestion is made that, after the period of 'roughing it', he found peacetime ministering far less exciting, an anti-climax even after trekking on the African veldt.

However, that may not be all, for his name is to be found on a memorial at St Joseph's RC Church in Chalfont St Peter, Bucks, and this would very probably have been as a result of being a member of the Carmelite community that had ministered in Chalfont St Giles, Chalfont St Peter, Chesham, Gerrard's Cross and Great Missenden from around 1909 onwards. But, the umbilical cord that had kept him connected to Kensington remained, for throughout this period and beyond, he was still included (thankfully for this research) on the London Electoral Register.

The Great War Cometh: Father Simon Knapp was 56½ years old when he became an Army padre once more. Although during the Boer War it appears that he was simply classed as a 'Civilian Chaplain', there was now a degree of military formality, for, on the 13th October, 1914 (according to LG No. 28945 dated the 20th October, 1914), he was appointed as a Temporary Chaplain to the Forces, 4th Class. This meant that, in status terms at least, he was equivalent to the Army's rank of Captain. The Army Chaplains' Department (AChD) was only 117 in number at the outbreak, and with the projected increase in the size of the Army, more chaplains like Father Simon were needed, but to do what?

Like the pre-war British Army, the AChD was deployed far and wide. Many of its padres were, like the Army's officers, from a similar social and educational background, and had little daily knowledge of the lives of other ranks, largely drawn from the working class. The comfort zone for the Army's padres was centred on the Officers' Mess. Moreover, there was little, if any, organisational structure within the AChD, and there were no job descriptions for the padres to describe their wartime role! There has been a suggestion that Church of England (CE) padres were told not to go forward whereas those padres who were either RC or from Other Denominations (OD), such as those from the Presbyterian, Wesleyan or Jewish faiths, were permitted, and certainly there was criticism of the CE padres from those in the trenches, officers and other ranks alike. But, Kitchener was considered anti-clerical, and could only see the role of a padre as dishing out tea and sticky buns well behind the lines and dealing with welfare matters. It was into this environment that these newly enlisted padres found themselves, and it was very much a case of sink or swim. Yet there were a few, and Father Simon Knapp was clearly one of those, whose previous experience of 'roughing it' would stand them in good stead, and more importantly, saw that their work was best carried out in the front line regardless of what Kitchener may have thought.

Initially spread thinly on the ground, on the basis of one CoE padre per Brigade, one RC padre per Division, and one Presbyterian padre per Division provided that the Division included a Scottish unit, giving a Divisional total of 4/5, the number assigned to a Division would eventually rise to 17, and four years into the war the number of padres would reach 3,416. And, before this stage was reached, there had also been support in the shape of Douglas Haig who was very pro-clerical and saw the role of padres being vital to maintaining the men's morale and spiritual well-being. Haig was not adverse, either, to having padres who had not made the grade to be shipped home. Some 5,000 padres were appointed during the war on the basis of 12 month contracts (a similar

arrangement to doctors with the RAMC), while in the early stages of the war they were issued with horses, although some opted for bicycles or acquired motor cycles. But, by the end of 1916, bicycles became the standard issue.

However, this is not the place to look further into detail regarding the Army's padres and we must return to Father Simon Knapp. But first, just a few more figures, not least the casualty list, based upon the CWGC data, which shows that 175 padres were killed or died during the war. Meanwhile, 3 VCs (Addison, Hardy and Mellish) would be awarded, while there were also 37 DSOs and 205 MCs or Bars to the MC. Undoubtedly there were also numerous MiDs and foreign awards, but the detail on these is not available.

With the BEF: There is a widespread view that Father Simon Knapp, having been appointed as a Chaplain on the 13th October, 1914, spent the whole of his Great War service attached to the 2nd Battalion, the Irish Guards (2/IG). This is not so, for his MIC notes that he was awarded the 1914 Star, indicating that he was 'somewhere in France (or Belgium)' on or before the 22nd November, 1914, while the 2/IG was only formed on the 18th July, 1915 at Warley in Essex, from reservists who had mustered with what was the 2nd (Reserve) Battalion. At this stage the residue of the latter Battalion would become the 3rd (Reserve) Battalion, remaining at Warley 'for the duration'. The 1st Battalion, the Irish Guards (1/IG) meanwhile, had been in France since the 13th August, 1914.

As to the subsequent events following Father Simon's appointment, we can now turn to an up and coming author of the time, one Rudyard Kipling, to assist us! As is well known, Kipling lost his son John, who was serving with 2/IG, during the Battle of Loos. Kipling would subsequently write the somewhat turgid two volume *The Irish Guards in the Great War* based upon diaries and anecdotal evidence, where Volume 2 specifically dealt with the exploits of 2/IG, while Volume 1 obviously covered 1/IG. Father Simon was mentioned in both.

We first find Father Simon joining 1/IG as its padre on 24th May, 1915 at Lapugnoy, albeit on a temporary basis to take charge of spiritual affairs. The incumbent padre, the Reverend Father John Gwynne, a Jesuit, was suffering from lumbago that had been caused by exposure, and he was being sent to Paris for electric treatment. To cover Father Gwynne's absence until the 17th July as it transpired, Father Simon was sent over from 25th Brigade, which was part of the 8th Division that had been formed back in October, 1914, largely by regular battalions returning from the various outposts of the British Empire. This Division landed at Le Havre during the first week of November, and it is reasonable to think that Father Simon was with them at this time. Moreover, it is also very likely that his spiritual services would have been called upon during the Battles of Neuve Chapelle, Aubers Ridge and Festubert in the months preceding, especially as the Brigade included the 1st Battalion, the Royal Irish Rifles.

Meanwhile, 2/IG would land at Le Havre on the 17th August, 1915, earmarked to become part of the 2nd Guards Brigade in the newly created Guards Division. Just under a fortnight later, on the 30th, both Battalions would be bivouacked at a village called St Pierre (Kipling offers no clue where this is but it is possibly in the mining area south west of Bethune), and Father Simon Knapp, already a familiar face to many of the members of 1/IG, now joined the 2/IG. For the Guards Division, there now ensued a period of formation training in preparation for the forthcoming Battle of Loos, although

there was still time for young officers to attend a course in equitation and for 2/IG to spend a day at ceremonial drill!

Although the Battle started on the 24th September, 1915, 2/IG did not reach the front until the 26th, and then engaged with the Germans in the early hours of the following morning, remaining in action until the 30th September. During this time, 2/IG had 324 casualties, but Kipling's account does not say anything of Father Simon's activities. It was during this period that John Kipling was reported as missing, and subsequently the Prince of Wales discussed young Kipling's fate with Father Simon, writing about this to a friend of John Kipling's on the 15th October. We may presume that during this period that Father Simon was busy helping the men who were injured and giving the last sacrament to those who were near to death. Perhaps it was for this and other work over the next few months while 2/IG remained in the Loos sector that Father Simon was awarded the MC (LG No. 29438 dated 11th January, 1916). However, he is mentioned in Volume 1 during this period, for on the 11th October, 1/IG's padre, Father John Gwynne would receive wounds from which he died at Bethune the following day. Of Father Simon, Kipling writes:

'But the Battalion lay at Verquin, cleaning up after its ten days' filth, and there was Mass on the morning of the 14th, when Father S Knapp came over from the 2nd Battalion and 'spoke to the men on the subject of Father Gwynne's death', for now that the two Battalions were next door neighbours, Father Knapp served both. No written record remains of the priest's speech, but those who survive that heard it say it moved all men's hearts.'

(Note: As an aside, Father Gwynne's eventual replacement as padre with 1/IG was the Reverend Father Frank M Browne, an Irish Jesuit priest, who would go on to be awarded the MC and Bar as well as both the French and Belgian Croix de Guerre. Father Browne is widely known today for having taken many of the final photographs of the RMS Titanic, having sailed on that fated ship from Southampton to Queenstown where he was ordered to disembark by his superiors.)

Between October, 1915 and February, 1916, 2/IG would be in and out of the line, but from the 18th to the 22nd February, they would march from La Gorgue, via Neuf, Vieux Berquin, St Sylvestre and Wormhoudt, to take up residence in a leaky, huddled camp, recently vacated by 1/IG, at Poperinghe. However, their stay, sadly punctuated by accidents during bombing-practice, was brief, for on the 6th March, 1916 2/IG entrained for Calais and a tented camp on the Dunkirk road.

Calais offered time for sport, and, not long after arriving, and undoubtedly in an attempt to emulate the Cheltenham Gold Cup meeting, 2/IG organised the 'Great Calais First Spring Meeting' on the sands, hoping that the tide would not wash away the steeplechase course. Again Kipling writes:

'Every soul in the [2nd Guards] Brigade who owned a horse, and several who had procured one, turned out and rode, including Father Knapp, aged fifty-eight.'

That comment clearly answers the earlier question as to Father Simon's equestrian skills a few pages earlier, but whether he attracted good odds is another matter, for small fortunes in francs were there to be made with a large Irish contingent ready to wager their pay away! Whatever the outcome, he was sufficiently fit to cross the

Channel once more to receive the MC from HM King George V at Buckingham Palace on the 12th April, 1916.

After their brief sojourn at Calais, 2/IG would then find themselves in and out of the line at Ypres from late March, 1916 until late July, 1916 before heading off to the Somme, arriving to a shrapnel welcome courtesy of the Germans. During August they would become only too familiar with places such as Mailly-Maillet and Auchonvillers, before taking over newly dug trenches to the east of Ginchy, a village (or the remnants thereof) now very well known to Channel Islanders. From there, on the 15th September they would advance as part of 2nd Guards Brigade to take Lesboeufs. Reading Kipling's book, it is clear that this advance was soon disjointed with men becoming separated from their Battalions and trench fighting in small mixed unit squads. Casualties were also coming thick and fast, and when 2/IG was withdrawn at midnight of the following day to muster at the Citadel, they totalled 166 from the attacking force. A week later they could 'field' four companies of 100 men thanks to the arrival of a new draft of men. Undoubtedly, Father Simon would have been in much demand, and one suspects that he was alongside the troops as they advanced, ready to help the wounded or to comfort the dying.

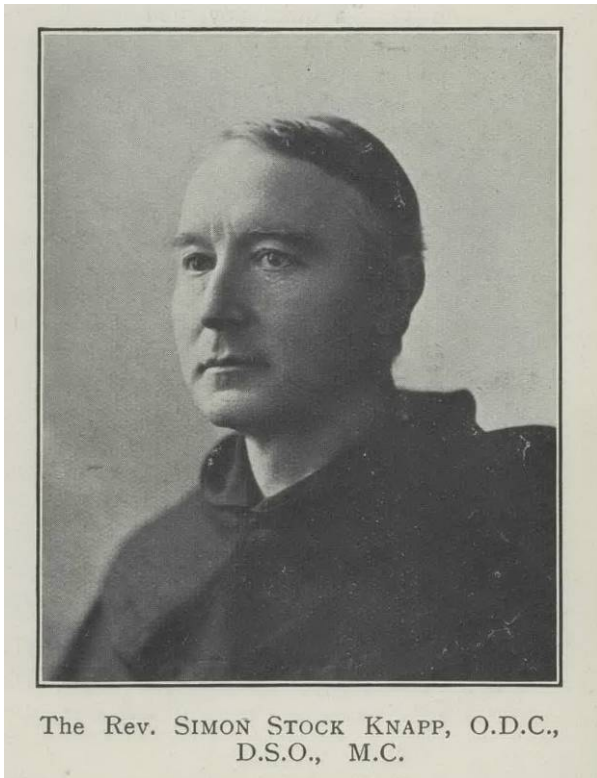
The latter quarter of 1916 and the first quarter of 1917 were given over to the routine of trench life on the Somme. It was during a particularly cold spell in this period that Father Simon nearly blew up the Officer's Mess! Having been told not to stoke up a fractious stove, he thereupon topped it up with what he thought was coal from a nearby sandbag. Too late, the stove exploded, sending shards of glass in all directions but without, fortunately, causing casualties to anything other than to the Nissen hut roof and walls. It transpired that the 'coal' was in fact bottles of Perrier water placed close to the fire to avoid becoming frozen! It was also around this period that he was promoted to Temporary Chaplain to the Forces, 3rd Class (equivalent to an Army Major) on the 6th January, 1917 (according to LG No. 29956 dated 20th February, 1917) without increase of pay and allowances. Lest anybody question the lack of an increase, it appears to have been a standard approach for certain branches of the Army such as the AChD, and not in anyway the means of recouping the cost of repairs to a Nissen hut!

The German retreat to the Hindenburg Line and Arras followed, and then at the end of May, 1917, 2/IG headed off to the Ypres Salient once more to camps at Cardoen Farm and International Corner a few miles behind a 'quiet' sector of the line, to discover, in due course, that they were to prepare for the Third Battle of Ypres, even though the geography of the Messines Ridge was still to be altered when they arrived. The move coincided with the news that he had now been awarded the DSO to accompany his MC (LG No. 30111 dated the 1st June, 1917).

During the weeks that followed for 2/IG, time was spent in the trenches, interspersed with the dreaded fatigues and the fatiguing spells of training. It does seem that the preparations were comprehensive, and included ways of dealing with the pillboxes. During a particularly heavy British barrage in late July, the Guards Division had managed to get a foothold on the eastern side of the Yser Canal, and 2/IG would find itself holding the captured German trenches. For Father Simon, one may suspect that his work during this time was 'routine', conducting masses, burial services, writing letters to bereaved families, and providing spiritual comfort to the men of his 'parish'.

Kipling notes that HM King George V visited the Guards and watched a training exercise for a Brigade attack on the 6th July, 1917. He would have very likely spoken to both the officers and the men, and one wonders whether he was also able to present the DSO to Father Simon during the course of his visit. There is a well noted example, and on film, of such an event a year later when the Reverend Hardy received his VC 'in the field' from the King at one of the Army HQ in France.

Third Ypres would commence in darkness at 03.50 hours on the 31st July, 1917, with infantry from the British Divisions moving forward on a six mile front. The Guards Division was on the left flank, with the French also advancing on the Guards' left and the 38th (Welsh) Division on their right. These two British Divisions, forming XIV Corps, proved to have made the best progress throughout that first day, crossing the Pilckem Ridge to a depth of some 3,000 yards. By the standards of the Somme, the Corps' casualties were considered moderate at 5,000 of which some 750 were killed, including a number in 2/IG which were in the follow-up line of troops. Father Simon was among those casualties, and Kipling tells us that:



The Rev. SIMON STOCK KNAPP, O.D.C.,
D.S.O., M.C.

(Courtesy St Edmund's College)

'At three o'clock Father Knapp appeared at Battalion Headquarters – that most insanitary place – and proposed to stay there. It was pointed out to him that the shelling was heavy, accommodation, as he could see, limited and he had better go to the safer Advanced Dressing Station [at Canada Farm?] outside Boesinghe and deal with the spiritual needs of his wounded as they were sent in. The request had to be changed to a reasonably direct order ere he managed to catch it; for, where his office was concerned, the good Father lacked something of that obedience he preached. And a few hours after he had gone to what, with any other man, would have been reasonable security, news arrived that he had been mortally wounded while tending cases "as they came out" of the Dressing Station. He must have noticed that the accommodation there was cramped too, and have exposed himself to make shelter for others.'

One must assume that Father Simon, very seriously injured having been hit by shrapnel was taken back the perilous six or seven miles to Dozinghem where the medical staff at the CCS could not save him, and where he died the following day. It appears that the loss of Father Simon, and also of 2/IG's CO, Acting Lieutenant Colonel Eric B Greer, MC, saddened the Irishmen who had taken more than 280 casualties over the previous three days. Kipling writes of the mood:

'But a clean-cut all-out affair, such as Boesinghe, was different, though it had been sadden by the loss of an unselfish priest who feared nothing created, and a Commanding Officer as unselfish and as fearless as he. The elder and the younger

man had both given all they had to the Battalion, and their indomitable souls stayed with it, when next day [the 1st August, 1917]...

The Battalion was told that it was returning to the line the following day, having been withdrawn at about 23.00 hours on the 31st for a short respite. Thus, on the 2nd August, 1917 it took over the left hand flank of the British frontline that abutted their French neighbours, before coming out again on the 4th, and being moved to Portchester Camp near Proven, where they arrived in time for breakfast, a change of socks and rum on the 5th August. At this point we leave 2/IG 'retiring to bed', and in the words of an unnamed soldier:

'We was dead done, but ye'll understand, 'twas nothing more than that. Our hearts was light – except for Father Knapp an' Greer; but if they had not been taken that day 'twould have been later. That sort of men, they are not made to live. They do an' they die.

Post Mortem: Father Simon's funeral would have, most likely, taken place on the day that he died. If so, it may have been that a small party from 2/IG were in attendance to bid farewell to their beloved padre.

However, in looking for any tangible material that included references to the death of Father Simon Knapp, there were several items discovered, in addition to the Times' 'Fallen Officers' obituary of the 17th August, 1917 that has been quoted earlier. The first of these appeared two days earlier, also in the Times, and read as follows:

'Memorial Services: The Rev. Father Knapp: *About 200 officers and men of the Irish Guards attended a solemn Requiem at Warley Catholic Church yesterday morning for the repose of the soul of the Rev. Father Knapp, DSO, MC. Father Knapp had acted as the Chaplain to the 2nd Battalion, Irish Guards since the beginning of the war, and recently died of wounds received while attending the wounded.'*

The passage, quoted earlier, from a letter written by General Allenby to his wife can be found in *'Allenby in Palestine, the Middle East correspondence of Field Marshal Viscount Allenby'*, selected and edited by Matthew Hughes, Army Records Society/Sutton Publishing, 2004 and, from that collection, another letter written by Allenby to his wife on the 26th August, 1917, and following the death of the Allenbys' only son, Horace Michael, on the 29th July, 1917, is quoted below:

*'I don't think that Michael could have been more happily placed, than in 'T' Battery; and I like your idea of applying his money for the Battery's benefit. You and I will always feel a connection with it. **What a wonderful and beautiful thought yours is; that Father Knapp is with our boy, and helping him to enter bravely on his new life.** Oh, my brave Darling, you are the mother of a hero. Your son could have been no other. The letter he wrote to you, on the 28th of July, is a mirror in which his whole character is shown.'*

It is clear that, as previously mentioned, Father Simon Knapp had left a considerable and positive impression on both the General and Lady Allenby, from their days together, back in South Africa. The next item that was discovered was found in Philadelphia's 'Evening Public Ledger' dated the 15th September, 1917. In an article which was titled 'The Last Call' and featured under the heading 'The World's War Through Woman's

Eyes', written by a lady called Ellen Adair in what can kindly be politely described as a romanticised account of Father Simon's fate, we read the following:

'He was the best-loved padre on the western front – a fearless man who scorned bullets, and whose life was given over to ministering the fallen. When the men went out into No-Man's Land on that deadly business known as the 'advance', he went too. No one could hold him back.

'Mother o' God, 'tis he that leads the charmed life!' said the regiment of Irish Guards among whom he worked. And indeed his was a charmed life. Hail of shrapnel, patter of machine gun bullets, thunder of howitzers and heavies – none of these mattered in the least to him. He escaped death by a miracle – a hundred times. All over the world, on many a field of battle, for many long years he had been known and honoured. And it was on the battlefield that he fell at last, mortally wounded. He was bending over the body of an Irish Guardsman, bandaging his wounds and cheering him. A thud, a sudden choking sound in the throat, and 'That's my call' breathed Father Simon Knapp as he fell forward. He died within a few minutes.

'Sure we'll never have another padre his equal', said an Irish Guardsman, who told me of the impressive funeral at the front when Lord de Vesci, Adjutant of the regiment, laid the decoration of the Distinguished Service Order on his coffin.

It was in London, in Kensington, that I attended the solemn Requiem sung for this great-souled padre. A party of Irish Guards was present and formed a guard of honour, with arms reversed. And the wives and mothers and sisters of soldiers he had helped were there, weeping the loss of a very brave and noble man. The church was crowded. 'But 'twas the service on the battlefield that was more wonderful than this', I heard a soldier whisper, 'and 'twas on the battlefield the padre was wishin' his last call would come. 'For, boys', he would say, 'I'd like to die alongside ye, fightin' to the end.'

Reading through the article, one harbours a sense that *la belle Ellen* was unprepared to let facts get in the way of a good story! However, in fairness, there were some elements of truth in her article.

Finally, and what is the most curious of all, each year between 1919 and 1947 on the anniversary of his death, there was an 'In Memoriam' entry in the Times to him, placed there by a lady called Hermione! These entries stopped in 1948, and one presumes that the lady in question had died at sometime during the year that preceded the 31st anniversary of his death.

Commemoration: As has been mentioned above, Father Simon Knapp's name appears on a memorial at St Joseph's RC Church in Chalfont St Peter, Bucks. He is also commemorated on the war memorial in the chapel at St Edmund's Catholic College, Ware, Herts, as well as at the Carmelite Priory in Kensington. His name, along with those of the other 174 padres who gave their lives during the Great War, was recorded on the Royal Army Chaplain Department's memorial in the Garrison Church in Aldershot pictured on the following page.

According to the Reverend Youngson's '*Greater Love*', after the Great War the Irish Guards commissioned a memorial window dedicated to Father Simon at the Carmelite Church in Kensington. Very sadly, it was destroyed by the German flying bomb

mentioned earlier. Curiously, as best as can be determined, the only commemoration by Jersey is in the 1919 Roll of Honour, and unlike the majority of the original entries, there is no reference to a parish, and his name does not appear on any memorial, yet it probably should. But for which parish?



The RACHD Memorial in the Garrison Church in Aldershot

There is also another interesting aspect regarding Father Simon's entry in Jersey's 1919 Roll of Honour, how did anybody in the Island get to know that his name should have been included? Can we be 100% certain that he never returned to the Island after 1873 or that there were no relatives there? He had changed his name from Frank to Francis and then to Simon, and there was a forty-four year gap between him entering St Edmund's and dying in Flanders. But, possibly any sense that this was a mystery might be misplaced. As we know, St Edmund's made light of 'his wanderings' and it would not have been unusual for him to have wandered over to Jersey and to visit his former home(s) at some stage. After all, his parents were buried in the Island. Similarly, it would have been no less difficult to have kept in touch with any of the friends from his youth. So, perhaps it was a case of letter writing to old chums coupled with the occasional visits whenever his duties as a priest allowed?

In Conclusion: It has been a considerable surprise, having set out back in mid-February trying to learn more of Father Simon Stock Knapp's life than could be conveyed in a single line in the Jersey Roll of Honour, and then to discover that there was so much in print concerning him. There are, of course, the usual sources such as his MIC and the London Gazettes to start from, as well as websites such as Ancestry and the Great War Forum. Yet, there is still the National Archive at Kew to visit, to read his War Office file (WO 339/23030) as well as the Irish Guards' War Diaries. So, this account cannot be in anyway considered conclusive, and has to remain a blend of

information, some of it unsubstantiated, or well-educated (?) guess work, and of course, it has been suitably convoluted!

Father Simon was undoubtedly a very highly regarded Chaplain, well loved even, when we read and analyse the words of Ellen Adair, Edmund Allenby and Rudyard Kipling while his immense courage and humanity were reflected in the awards of the MC and the DSO. And, it is fascinating to discover that he was rubbing shoulders with names that are historically familiar to us today, not only Allenby and Oates who have been mentioned, but royalty and others such as Harold Alexander, the future World War Two Field Marshal. But, he was very much a friend and spiritual companion to the other ranks in the Irish regiments to whom he was attached to, and above all, this was the most important aspect of his life.

Acknowledgements:

The Reverend Father John Hughes, OCD, Carmelite Priory, Kensington, W8
Mr Mark Leslie, Development Director, St Edmund's College, Ware
The Superintendent-Registrar's Office, Jersey
The Parish of St Lawrence, Jersey
The Jersey Archive

References:

www.cwgc.org

www.ancestry.co.uk

www.stedmundcollege.org

- Reverend David T Youngson *'Greater Love: A Directory of Chaplains of the British Army, Australian, Canadian, East African, New Zealand and South African Forces and Ministers of Religion who gave their lives in the period 1914-1922'*
- Diane Moore *'Deo Gratias, A History of the French Catholic Church in Jersey: 1790-2007'*
- Matthew Hughes,
Army Records Society/
Sutton Publishing *'Allenby in Palestine, the Middle East correspondence of Field Marshal Viscount Allenby'*
- Rudyard Kipling *'The Irish Guards in the Great War – Volume 1, The First Battalion'*
- Rudyard Kipling *'The Irish Guards in the Great War – Volume 2, The Second Battalion'*
- Tonie and Valmai Holt *'My Boy Jack? The Search for Kipling's Only Son'*
- The British Library's 19th Century Newspapers
The Times Digital Archive 1785-1985
The London Gazette, Numbers 27353, 28945, 29438, 29956, 30111
The Jersey Independent Almanac, 1860-1870
The Gosset Almanac, 1860-1870
The British Press Almanac, 1860-1870