



Library and Archives

Military History of the Isle of Man

Many Manx people have served in the British army and earlier militias which existed in the 18th and 19th centuries. During the First World War the numbers enlisting were very high relative to the size of the population with many casualties. In the Second World War the territorial unit saw service with the 'Desert Rats' in Africa and Italy. The Island was used for training and other purposes by the military, Royal Air Force and Royal Navy during that conflict: radar, still in its infancy, was taught using red using premises on Douglas Head.

War memorial information for individuals collated by the late Roger Christian is searchable on our online catalogue <https://www.imuseum.im> (use the People green tab and advanced search War Memorials option at the bottom of list).

See the First World War Biographies section in People advanced search for details recorded by Canon Kermode, Vicar of St George's Church, Douglas on the whereabouts and condition of men from his parish on active service (MS 10003). Also searchable under First World War Biographies are men recorded in the Muster Roll of the Isle of Man Volunteers, 1864-1916 (MS 00789 C).

Descriptions of additional printed material can be accessed using the Library turquoise tab (advanced search option) to narrow the search. Descriptions of manuscript resources (pink tab) are being released gradually to iMuseum.



HMS St George cadets during Salute the Soldier Week parade, Douglas



General Printed Sources

Chappell, Connery - Island Lifeline (Isle of Man Steam Packet 1830-1980)

Prescot: T.Stephenson & Sons Ltd, 1980

ISBN 0 901314 20 X

Chapter 5 p.p. 80-92 The Great War Chapter 7 p.p. 108-122 At War Again

Steam Packet ships were requisitioned for both wars with several losses.

Library Ref: B.160/CHA

Clague, Curwen - Ack Ack: A history of the 15th (Isle of Man) Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment RA,TA

Douglas: The Old Comrades Association 15th (IOM) LAA Regt RA, 1981

Second World War service of this regiment. The Territorial Army ceased to have a Manx unit in 1968.

Library Ref: B.114/CLA

Cubbon, William - The Vigil; Watch and Ward and the Crosh Vushta (Mustering Cross)

In his book Island Heritage, Manchester: G.Falkner and Sons, 1952. Chapter 14 p.p. 118-130

An account from Viking times to the 17th century with an illustration of where the watch stations were in 1627.

Library Ref: F.64/CUB

Francis, Paul - Isle of Man 20th century military archaeology

Vol 1-5 Douglas: Culture Vannin, 2006

For related research papers see MS 11313.

Library Ref: B.114/FRAq

Military Service Local Tribunal - Report on the work of the Military Service Local Tribunal from its constitution in December 1939 until its termination in December 1960

Douglas: Norris Modern Press, 1961

Concise account which includes numbers of service personnel (both volunteers and conscripts) for wartime and national service and details of relevant regulations.

Library Ref: B.114/MIL (pamphlet)

Moore, Arthur William - A History of the Isle of Man

Douglas: Manx National Heritage, 1992, (reprint of 1900 edition) 2 vols. 1026 p.p.

ISBN 0 901106 33 X

The standard history of the Isle of Man containing military references including the civil war, fencibles, the militia, Peel Castle and Castle Rushen.

Moore (1853-1909) was an MHK, Speaker of the House of Keys, prolific author and historian.

Library Ref: F.64/MOO

Moore, Arthur William - Military Organisation of the Isle of Man

In Yn Lioar Manninagh vol I, pt 2. p.p. 141-153 (1890)

Library Ref: L.6

Moore, Arthur William - The Northern Manks and the Southern Manx Volunteers

In Yn Lioar Manninagh vol. IV, p.p. 96-110. (1903)

Library Ref: L.6

Moore, Arthur William - Some notes on the Manx Fencibles

In Proceedings of the IOM Natural History and Antiquarian Society vol. I, p.p. 162-167. (1915)

Library Ref: L.6

Sargeant, Bertram Edward - A Military History of the Isle of Man

Arbroath: T.Buncle & Co, c.1947

Includes a list of personnel during the Second World War. Sargeant (1877-1978) was Government Secretary within Isle of Man Government, 1910-1943.

Library Ref: B.114/SAR

Skillen, Hugh - The Enigma Symposium 1998

Pinner: Hugh Skillen, 1998

ISBN 0 9531330 0 1

Includes an account of the Special Operators Training Battalion on the island, with group photographs and memoirs.

Library Ref: B.114/SKILq

Watch and Ward in AD 1627 - Proceedings of the IOM Natural History and Antiquarian Society

Vol. III, p.p. 258-265. 1928

Library Ref: L.6



First World War recruitment car bedecked with flags and posters



Photograph Sources

The Library holds assorted photographic resources relating to the armed forces and individuals.

Only a small selection is currently digitised and searchable on iMuseum.

Subject boxes exist for Military, Naval (HMS St George & HMS Valkyrie) and Aviation (for RAF and RNAS Ronaldsway images).

Early Military Conflict Sources (Pre 1914)

Blundell, William - A History of the Isle of Man Compiled 1648-1656; reprinted in Manx Society Vol. XXV

Douglas: Manx Society, 1876

Chapters XI and XII p.p. 88-97 are about the havens, castles, fortresses and watch system. An interesting contemporary account.

Library Ref: F.64/BLU

Cowin, F - Captain John Quilliam R.N.

Proceedings of the IOM Natural History and Antiquarian Society Vol VII, p.p. 521-574. 1974

The career of John Quilliam in the Royal Navy including his service with Nelson at Trafalgar.

Library Ref: L.6

Craine, David - The Horsemen and their Successors 1793-1825

Journal of the Manx Museum Vol III, No. 50, p.p. 167-171

Douglas: Manx Museum, 1937.

Each Parish provided 4-6 horsemen to ride with the Parish Captain to escort the Lord to Tynwald and assist with Watch and Ward. They subsequently became the Constitutional Dragoons (1793-1796) and later, Manx Yeomanry Cavalry, before disbandment in 1825.

Library Ref: A.365/1/CRA

Curphey, R.A. - The Coastal Batteries 1. The Lord's Defences: to the Revestment

In Journal of the Manx Museum Vol VII, No. 83, p.p. 50-57.

Douglas: Manx Museum, 1967.

1530s to 1765 with location maps.

The Coastal Batteries 2. From the Revestment to the twentieth century

In Journal of the Manx Museum Vol VII, No. 84, p.p. 89-92.

Douglas: Manx Museum, 1968.

Library Ref: A.365/1/CUR

Dickinson, J.R. - The Earl of Derby and the Isle of Man, 1643-1651

In Transactions of the Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire, Vol. 141 (1992) p.p. 39-76

Deals with the fortification of the Island.

Library Ref: F.69/DIC

Forster, R.E. - The Press Gang in the IOM

Proceedings of the IOM Natural History and Antiquarian Society Vol. VIII, p.p. 87-99. 1979.

The press gang continued until the end of the Napoleonic Wars.

Library Ref: L.6

Freeman, B.F.M. - Historical Records of the Manx Yeomanry

Reprinted from the Manx Sun 2nd & 9th December 1905.

Summary of the Yeomanry from 1793-1825 with some earlier historical notes. See also David Craine article above.

Library Ref: B.114/FREF

Greeves, J.R.H. - Captain Thurot's Expedition

Off-print from Transactions of the Dumfriesshire and Galloway Natural History and Antiquarian Society, Vol. XXXVII p.p. 147-156. c.1960.

Library Ref: G.88/THU (pamphlet)

Grant, Duncan Charles - 'Fencible Life and Discipline'

University of Liverpool dissertation, 2001

Archives ref: MS 10577

Greeves, J.R.H. - Genuine and Curious Memoirs of the Famous Captain Thurot, 1760

Includes references to the Isle of Man, p.p.9, 45, 48. Later reprinted by the Percy Society in 1845. See M 07991.

Library Ref: G.88/THU (pamphlet)

Kennish, William - A Method for concentrating the fire of a broadside of a ship of war...

London: John Bradley, 1837.

Born in Maughold, Kennish (1799-1862) was an inventor, poet and naval master carpenter and engineer. This technical publication was a remarkable achievement.

Library Ref: B.114/KENq

McKay, Ian Stuart Henry - 'Defending the Isle of Man: To what extent was the Isle of Man of strategic military importance in relation to the development of physical defences and armed forces on the island between 1640 and 1830?'

University of Chester Masters dissertation, 2011

Archives ref: MS 13247



M'Kerlie, E.Marianne H. - Two Sons of Galloway Dumfries: Robert Dinwiddie, 1928.

Pages 16 to 65 are reminiscences of Robert M'Kerlie's life in Fencible Infantry: 2nd Royal Manx Regiment 1796-1798, particularly in Ireland during the rebellion of 1798. An interesting account of military life and the brutal conditions of the time.

Library Ref: B.114/MKE

Mercurius Politicus, No. 75, 1651 Reprinted in Manx Society vol. XXVI Douglas: Manx Society 1877.

The extract on pages 63-76 give an account of the surrender of the Isle of Man to Colonel Robert Duckenfield during the English Civil War, with the terms of agreement and an account of arms, ammunition etc.

Library Ref: F.64/MKE

Richardson, Matthew - The Isle of Man in the Age of Sail and Musket 1750 to 1815

Douglas: Manx National Heritage, 2019.
ISBN 978 0 901106 90 2

The years 1750 to 1815 were among the most turbulent in the history of the Isle of Man. Manx soldiers and sailors found themselves caught up in numerous wars and foreign adventures. This book captures the spirit of those times, often using the words of those who were there.

Library Ref: B.114/RIC

Robson, Tom - Boy Seaman the true story 1790-1976

Darlington: Published by the author, 1996. ISBN 0 9527749 0 9

p.p. 49-74, chapter 4 HMS St George 1940-45. During the Second World War the training of boy entrants to the navy was moved to Douglas using a newly built school and part of a holiday camp.

Library Ref: B.158/ROB

Roeder, Charles - Francois Thurot (1727-1760) and his Naval Engagement off the Isle of Man

In Manx Notes and Queries, p.p. I-XVI. Douglas: S.K.Broadbent & Co, 1904.

An account of the naval career of this French captain and his subsequent death during a sea battle near Ramsey. Commemorated by the paintings and engravings of R. Wright which are in the MNH collections.

Library Ref: E.244/ROE

Sargeant, Bertram Edward - Relics of the Manx Fencibles and Volunteers

In Journal of the Manx Museum Vol V. No. 70, p.p. 129-131
Douglas: Manx Museum, 1944.

Description of items in the museum collection with some background detail.

Sargeant (1877-1978) was Government Secretary within Isle of Man Government 1910-1943.

Library Ref: A.365/1/SAR

Sargeant, Bertram Edward: The Royal Manx Fencibles. Aldershot: Gale and Polden, 1947

Fencible Corps were first raised as three companies of infantry in 1779 (disbanded in 1783). Raised again in 1793 as First Corps (disbanded in 1802). Second Corps was raised in 1795 and saw service in Ireland and England before being disbanded at Whitehaven in 1802. Third Corps was raised in 1803 (essentially for home defence) and disbanded in 1811.

Library Ref B.114/SAR

Stimpson, Robert W.- William Kennish Manninagh Doogie

Douglas: Robert W. Stimpson

Library Ref: G.88/KEN

Young, G.V.C. and Foster, Caroline - Captain Francois Thurot

Peel: Mansk-Svenska Publishing, 1986.

ISBN 0 907715 23 0

Biography of the French naval captain which includes the battles off the Island's coast in which he was killed.

Library Ref: G.88/THU

First World War Sources

Blackburn, C.J. - How the Manx Fleet helped in the Great War: The story of the Isle of Man Steam Packet Boats on service

Douglas: Louis G Meyer Ltd, 1923. Republished as a facsimile reprint in 1993

Library Ref: B.114/BLA

Camping in the Isle of Man at Knockaloe, Peel Battery, Ballahot and Castletown: situation, manoeuvring area, water sup.p.ly, means of access etc

Douglas: Rooth and Co, c.1910.

Illustrated 12 page brochure sent to military units using the Island for summer training camps.

Library Ref: B.114/CAMq(1)

Camping in the Isle of Man at Ramsey, Ballahot, Knockaloe, Castletown and Peel Battery: situation, manoeuvring area, water sup.p.ly, means of access etc

Douglas: Rooth and Co, c.1911.

Illustrated 18 page brochure sent to military units. This version includes some photographs.

Library Ref: B.114/CAMq(2)



Christian, Roger - Manx National Roll of Honour 1939-1945: A list of the 494 Manx men and women who lost their lives in the 1939-1945 World War

Santon: Roger Christian

Transcribed from the copy held in the Royal Chapel at St John's

Library Ref: B.144/CHR

Isle of Man Great War 1914-1918 Roll of Honour

Douglas: Isle of Man Local War Pensions Committee, c.1934

A list of 1,165 Manxmen who died on active service or from resulting illness, with full name, service, address, decorations, cause and date of death, but not service number. Also included are Manxmen residing in the colonies who died while serving in Colonial Forces. Decorations awarded to Manxmen are included.

Library Ref: B.114/ROL

McCauley, John - A Manx Soldier's War Diary

Articles published in the IOM Examiner between July and December 1932 which tell of his service from August 1914 to the Armistice.

Library Ref: B.114/MCCf

Richardson, Matthew: This Terrible Ordeal

Douglas: Manx National Heritage, 2013

ISBN 978 0 901106 67 4

Draws on first-hand accounts in this overview of the Isle of Man's role in the Great War. Accompanied a major exhibition at the Manx Museum with the same title mounted in 2014.

Library Ref: F.64/RIC

Sargeant, Bertram Edward - The Isle of Man and the Great War

Douglas: Brown and Sons, c.1920.

Includes mention of the internment camps and a roll of honour.

Sergeant (1877-1978) was Government Secretary within Isle of Man Government 1910-1943.

Library Ref: B.114/SAR

Skillicorn, Patricia - The Hammer of Thor: The impact of the 1st World War (1914-1918) on the people of the Isle of Man

Douglas: Culture Vannin, 2016.

ISBN 978 1526204981

Library Ref: F.64/SKI

Smith, Caroline - Isle of Man in the Great War

Barnsley: Pen and Sword, 2014.

ISBN 978 1 78383 122 7

Library Ref: F.64/SMI

Smith, Robert D Early cast-iron ordnance with particular reference to guns on the Isle of Man

Journal of the Ordnance Society 1991 Vol. 3, p.p. 25-45.

ISSN 0957-1698

Illustrated account of ten 16th/17th century cast iron guns located at Derby Fort, Langness, Peel Castle, Castle Rushen and the Manx Museum.

Library Ref: B.114/SMI

Statutory Rules and Orders - 1914-1921

Includes Defence of the Realm orders, National Registration, Military Service, control of Aliens etc. Some 125 orders covering aspects of life during the First World War.

Library Ref: B.114/MIL

West, Margery - Island at War: The remarkable role played by the small Manx nation in the Great War 1914

Laxey: Western Books, 1986.

ISBN 0 9511512 0 7

Examines the military contribution of the Manx, the economic and political effects of the loss of the tourist trade income and the internment camps. Includes a roll of honour and list of decorations awarded at the rear.

Library Ref: B.114/WES

Second World War Sources

Carver, R.M.P. - A short history of the Seventh Armoured Division, Oct 1938 - May 1943

c.1943

The 15th Light AA Regt: Manx Territorials 41st and 42nd batteries were attached to this division and saw service with it in North Africa and Italy.

Library Ref: B.114/CAR

Cleary, Alan - Chain Home Low Radar at Meayll Hill

In Rimington, John, Features and History of the Meayll Peninsula p.p. 54-59

Rushen Parish Commissioners, 2000

Summary of Second World War military installations.

Library Ref: F.75/15/CLE

Farrior, James - My World War 2 Civilian Technical Corps and US Merchant Marine Experiences

Alphretta: James S. Farrior, 2004

Library Ref: B.114/FAR

Kissack, P.D. - Home Guard Southern Company History

Short typescript history of the Southern Group of 2.5 companies covering the south of the island with an enrolment of some 753 between June 1940 and December 1944.

Library Ref: B.114/1xf (p.205)



Kniveton, Gordon N. - Manx Aviation in War and Peace
Douglas: Manx Experience, 1985. No ISBN. p.p. 34-71
RAF Jurby, Andreas and RNAS Ronaldsway (HMS Urley)
were active on the Island during the Second World War:
Jurby as an air observer bombing and gunnery school,
Andreas as a fighter station and later training station,
Ronaldsway as a training station.
Library Ref: B.192/3/KN1q

Pertwee, Jon - Moon Boots and Dinner Suits
London: Elm Tree Books, 1984
ISBN 0 241 11337 7
Pages 173-190 refer to his war time experiences in the Isle
of Man including the naval training station HMS Valkyrie.
Library Ref: G.88/PER

**Quine, Julie - Manx Brothers in Arms:
World War One from a Father's Perspective**
Poland: sn., 2017
ISBN 978 1536838794
Library Ref: F.64/QUI

Richardson, Matthew - Isle of Man at War 1939 - 1945
Barnsley: Pen and Sword, 2018.
ISBN 978 1 52672 073 3
The remarkable story of the Manx people and their
homeland, in the most destructive conflict of the
twentieth century.
Library Ref: B.114/RIC

**Sleigh, W.H. - Isle of Man Historic Radar Sites
World War Two**
1998 research notes which explain the background to the
development of the chain home defence system. Includes
technical drawings and site plans for Dalby and Cregneash.
Archives Ref MS 10033

Spiers, Derek - Troopships to Calais
Rainham: Meresborough Books, 1988. No ISBN
The story of Calais as a military port from 1944 to 1947.
p.p. 58-76 refer to Steam Packet vessels Lady of Mann, Ben
my Chree, Victoria and Manxman.
Library Ref: B.160/SPI

**Christian, Roger - research records into war memorials
on and off island**
More details available from staff on request.
Archives Ref: MD 1256; MD 1233; MS 10512; MS 11623



MANN AT WAR

The 'Mann at War' Gallery in the Manx Museum commemorates the role of Manx men, women and children in conflicts from the 1700s to the present day. It includes the uniforms of Major Caesar Bacon who fought at Waterloo and the naval uniform of Captain John Quilliam who served with Nelson at Trafalgar.



Before your visit

Check our Library and Archives opening times (Weds to Sat with exceptions). Write down any facts you know for sure. Be prepared to stow your bags in a locker and use only pencil. Bring a USB key if you want to save digital data and also a camera. Allow sufficient time for research and possible visits to sites of interest. You will need to register with us so bring some ID showing your home address.

You can find a welcome leaflet, contact details and other available guides on our library page:

<https://manxnationalheritage.im/collections/library-and-archives>

To give advance notice of a visit you are welcome to email the team at library@mnh.im

MNH website home page: <https://manxnationalheritage.im>

Title image: 1st Manx Company on parade, First World War

