



Famous Ulster-Scots O' Mourne

*Robert Hanna V.C.
1887-1967*

A Son of the Close

Sergeant-Major Robert Hanna, a proud Ulster-Scot was born in the townland of Aughnahoor, near Hanna's Close, Kilkeel. The son of a farmer, Robert attended Kilkeel Presbyterian Meeting House and was also a member of Aughnahoor Loyal Orange Lodge 343B. He was a pupil of Ballinran Presbyterian School, before working for a time in the local farming industry and later emigrating in 1905, aged eighteen to Canada.



Whilst in Canada, he found work in the forestry industry logging trees near Vancouver, eventually setting up his own company and served as a volunteer in the Canadian Militia. Although living in Canada, Robert continued to pay his dues to Aughnahoor Lodge, but also joined an Ontario Lodge in Vancouver.

Following the outbreak of World War One, Robert Hanna was one of the first members to enlist in the 29th (Vancouver) Battalion Canadian Expeditionary Force. In this Battalion, he saw much action during World War One including the Battle of Mount Sorrell, The Somme and Vimy Ridge. It was at the iconic Hill 70 near Lens, France, where Robert won his Victoria Cross as Company Sergeant-Major on the 21st August 1917. He received this reward for his courageous actions and was presented with the Victoria Cross by King George V at a ceremony in Buckingham Palace in December 1917.


After he was presented with his award, Robert returned to his hometown of Kilkeel, by now promoted to the rank of a Lieutenant, where he was greeted by a crowd of over three thousand people in the Town Square who had come out to honour him for bringing distinction to Mourne for his bravery. At the end of the war, Robert returned to Vancouver and the logging industry, where he later married a girl Hannah of Scottish parentage. Robert was buried at the Masonic Cemetery in British Columbia and his officer's sword is still today proudly on display in Kilkeel's Royal British Legion.




The Schomberg Society

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