

## **Hector Hugh Munro**

### **A Biography from Military Records**

The information which appears below was obtained from sources as follows: Service Record, Medal Cards, Soldiers Died in the Great War, Commonwealth War Graves Commission, Online Newspapers

Hector Hugh Munro was born in Akyab, Burma circa 1870, the son of Charles Augustus Munro, a Colonel in the Bengal Staff Corps, and his wife May Frances. Although born in Burma, Hector was a British subject. He had an elder sister Ethel May, born circa 1869. She did not marry and later in life lived in St, John's Wood, London. He also had an elder brother Charles Arthur born circa 1870. Charles was subsequently appointed Governor of Mountjoy Prison in Dublin. Hector became a journalist and author, best known for short stories which he wrote under the pen name 'Saki'. He did not marry

Hector enlisted with service number K/227 in the 22nd Battalion Royal Fusiliers (City of London Regiment) at White City in London on 25 August 1914, less than a month after the declaration of war. It was said that he was subsequently offered a commission in the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders but refused this and enlisted as an ordinary soldier because he felt that officer training would delay his arrival at the front. He also had friends who enlisted at the same time. At the age of 44 he was one of the oldest recruits. His age on enlistment is recorded as 40 years and it is possible he felt that his real age might make it less likely that he would be accepted. He was physically unimpressive, 5' 8½" tall, 10 stone in weight and with a 34½" expanded chest. He had brown hair and grey eyes. By the time he enlisted both his parents were dead and he named his brother Charles as next of kin.

He was promoted Lance Corporal on 20 April 1915 and full Corporal 20 August following. It was over a year after enlisting that he was posted to France. He arrived on 16 November 1915, possibly delayed by having briefly contracted influenza in September. He was promoted again to Acting Lance Sergeant on 18 September 1916 but less than two months later he would be dead. Hector Hugh Munro was killed in Action on 16 November 1916. His body was never identified. Three months after Hector's death his personal effects were sent to his brother Charles.

Hector service qualified him for the award of the 1914-15 Star, British War and Victory medals. The medals were sent to his brother Charles, the 1914-15 star on 21 May 1920 and the others on 11 June 1922. His name was recorded on the Thiepval Memorial.

#### **Footnote (from other sources)**

The circumstances of Hector's death could almost have been a scene from one of his stories, which frequently end with an unusual twist. Serving near the French town of Beaumont-Hamel, he was sheltering in a shell hole when he was fatally shot by a German sniper. According to several sources his last words were: "Put that damned cigarette out!", which suggests that the sniper saw the light of the cigarette and Hector was the unfortunate and undeserving victim of another man's carelessness.