

LANCE SERJEANT

## GEORGE CECIL FRANK KITNEY

**Service Number:** 2721566

### Regiment & Unit/Ship

Irish Guards

1<sup>st</sup> Bn.

### Date of Death

Died 30 April 1943

Age 26 years old

### Buried or commemorated at

MASSICAULT WAR CEMETERY

V.E. 19.

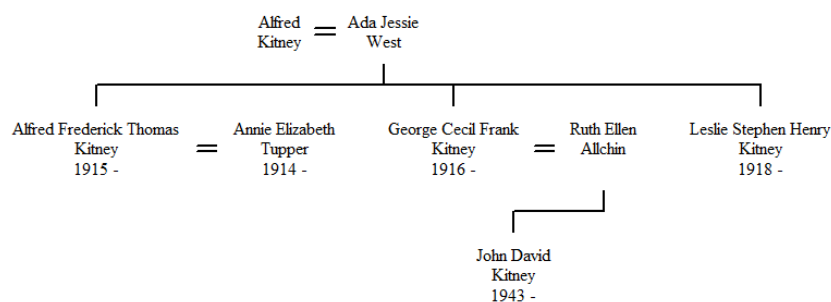
Tunisia

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George Cecil Frank Kitney was born 08-Nov-1916, Address - 8 Temperance Row, Wouldham, Kent. Baptised 17-Dec-1916 at All Saints, Wouldham, Kent.

### [Source Cuxton & Halling Magazine Aug-2015]

This notice appeared first in last month's magazine and I am grateful for this response from Mrs Kathleen Garratt. "George Kitney was my father. He was always called John, as my grandfather called him John Bull. I don't know why. John was in the 1st Battalion Irish Guards. It was while he was on embarkation leave in January 1943 his son, also John, was born. We were always pleased he saw him. On 30th April 1943 John was killed in North Africa and is buried in Massicault War Cemetery, Tunisia."



### [Source Cuxton & Halling Magazine Aug-2015]

John David born 20-Jan-1943. 7 Belgrave Street, Eccles. Baptised 07-Mar-1943 at St John The Baptist, Halling.

Many of those buried at Massicault War Cemetery died in the preparation for the final drive to Tunis in April 1943 and in that advance at the beginning of May". However the latest date of death in the cemetery is 20 Jun 1944. So the cemetery clearly isn't exclusively for casualties of actions in Tunisia.

### [Source British-Genealogy.com]

### **Irish Guards in North Africa and Italy**

In March 1943 the 1st Irish Guards, who had been based in the UK since their return from Norway in 1940, landed in the North African country of Tunisia. The battalion fought in the Medjez Plain area, seeing heavy action at Djebel bou Aoukaz, or 'Bou'. Part of the area was taken on 27 April and further fighting continued for several days with the Irish Guards suffering heavy casualties.

During an action on 28 March, Lance-Corporal Kenneally of the 1st Irish Guards charged down the forward slope of the ridge on which his company was positioned, attacking the main body of a German company preparing to assault the ridge. He fired his Bren light machine gun as he advanced, causing so much surprise and confusion that the Germans broke in disorder and retreated. The Lance-Corporal returned to his position unharmed.

On 30 April Lance-Corporal Kenneally repeated his brave actions when, accompanied by a Sergeant of the Reconnaissance Corps, charged the enemy who were again forming up to assault the same ridge. Both men charged the Germans, inflicting heavy casualties on the Germans which resulted in the rout of the German force. The two men began to return to their position but as they did so, Kenneally was hit in the thigh. However, he continued to fight, refusing to relinquish his Bren gun or leave his position. Despite his wound he fought for the rest of the day and for his actions was awarded the Victoria Cross, the regiment's first of the war.

Sixty hand-picked men of the Irish Guards were part of the 14,000 strong British contingent that took part in the victory parade in the capital Tunis on 20 May 1943. In December of that year the 1st Irish Guards reached Italy.

The battalion took part in the Anzio landings on 22 January 1944. The battalion saw action at Carroceto where they repulsed several German attacks. The battalion also took part in the attack on Campoleone, where they experienced heavy casualties. A German counterattack was launched several days later. The battalion inflicted heavy casualties on the Germans, but were surrounded the following day with little support against German armour, and were forced to fight their way through to Allied lines, suffering many casualties in the process.

A few further actions took place for the battalion's companies but, by April, the battalion was severely depleted in manpower and returned to the UK, where they would remain for the duration of the war as a training battalion.

**[Source History of the Irish Guards. [Military-history.fandom.com](http://military-history.fandom.com)]**