

Tributes to Dr George Blair MBE by Friends of Millbank

Dr John Blair¹

The Second World War saw my big brother George graduate in 1940 in Medicine at St Andrews. He did his 'house job' at Dundee Royal Infirmary in the Ear, Nose, and Throat ward, number 10. Then called up, he went first to Beckett's Park in Leeds to do his basic training for the RAMC, learned to ride a motor bike, and was in mid-Wales for a short time.

Posted to be Regimental Medical Officer to 5th Field Regiment, Royal Artillery, he went with them to India, to Nowshera in the North-Western Province of India, and joined the 10th Indian Division. The Division went to Malaya, to Ipoh. It fought through the Malayan campaign, was taken prisoner at the fall of Singapore on 15th February, 1942.

He was 'missing' for over a year, and we had his first tiny postcard in 1943. The second one is shown in the RAMC centenary pictorial book.² He was a POW in Formosa, and was awarded the MBE at the end of the war for gallantry and devoted service while a prisoner.

His memorabilia are in the Army Medical Services Headquarters in Robertson House at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst, Camberley.

¹ Colonel (retd) John S G Blair OBE, TD., President Friends of Millbank, and Former President of both Scottish and British Societies for the History of Medicine. Also one of only two Britons to become Vice-President of the International Society of the History of Medicine. Served as National Service officer from 1952 – 1955, during which time he studied for the External BA of London University, achieving first place in the final exam for the degree. He then joined the Territorial Army where he commanded four Reserve units, retiring in 1992 as Honorary Colonel 225 (Highland) Field Ambulance. Consultant surgeon at Perth Royal Infirmary, Honorary Senior Lecturer in Surgery at Dundee University, and a member of the Court of Examiners of the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh. He was elected Doctor of Letters (honoris causa) of St Andrews University in 1991. Mitchiner Lecturer 1994. Chairman of the BMA Armed Forces Committee 1993 – 1998.

Co-author (with Major General Ticehurst) of the RAMC Centenary pictorial book *'The Royal Army Medical Corps 1898 – 1998 Reflections of One Hundred Years of Service'*

Author of *Centenary History of the Royal Army Medical Corps* (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press 1998)

² The RAMC Centenary pictorial book was co-authored by Colonel JSG Blair and Major General AC Ticehurst and titled *'The Royal Army Medical Corps 1898 – 1998 Reflections of One Hundred Years of Service'*. (Publisher: RAMC, 1998)

See page 48: A letter written in 1943 by the Regimental Medical Officer of 5th Field Regiment, RA, from POW camp in Formosa. On the same page is a drawing by James Morris, Official War Artist 'Released POWs from his camp in Kiirung, Formosa', and a photograph 'Memorial Chapel, Changi, Singapore. Notice personal messages on board.'