

## TED JOHNSON, 1922–2017



Ted was born in Dublin on 11 February 1922. His mother and father farmed in County Westmeath, Eire, where he spent his early childhood. At the age of ten, he went away to boarding school at Wesley College, Dublin. Around this time, his mother moved to Malahide, a little seaside town north of Dublin.

At the age of 14, he entered St Colomba's College, at the foot of the Dublin mountains. He enjoyed his four years there, particularly hockey, athletics, tennis and golf. He always said that he did not excel in the classroom but that he did reasonably well. His best subject seems to have been the Irish language in which he was given a credit.

He was also a useful member of the school choir which he greatly enjoyed.

When he left St Colomba's in July 1940, Europe was at war, and he joined the Royal Ulster Rifles. After a year of training, he was commissioned into the Royal Ulster Rifles as Second Lieutenant, and posted to Second London Irish Rifles at Littlehampton which was helping to defend the beaches on the south coast of England. He obviously wasn't very impressed with the defences, later recalling lots of barbed wire and one gun per platoon. In July 1942 he was posted to the Middle East and, being of Irish nationality, was selected to join the Second Battalion Royal Irish Fusiliers in Malta. After warfare training in Syria and Egypt, he was sent to Palestine to prepare for the occupation of Leros in the Dodecanese. He was on Leros for roughly three months during which time he and his fellow soldiers were heavily bombed by the Germans. Without British air and sea support, they were forced to surrender and he was taken prisoner of war in November 1943 and was liberated only in April 1945.

After the war, he served with the Royal Irish Fusiliers in Egypt, Israel and Palestine, before returning to the United Kingdom. In 1948, he became Adjutant at the Army Apprentices School at Arborfield where he met his future wife, Ruth. They were married in Basel, Switzerland, in 1951. He was then posted to the Third Battalion Gold Coast Regiment, accompanied by his wife. It was here in Ghana, that his first two daughters were born. From there he brought his young family to Belfast where he served as Adjutant at Queen's University Officers' Training Corps for three years. In 1957, he rejoined the Irish Fusiliers in Wuppertal, West Germany, where his third daughter was born.

In 1958, he retired from the army and joined Schweppes and became a sales representative. The family moved to the White House, Duns Tew, where they lived for the next 57 years, during which time he gave his service to the church in Deddington. He was a church warden for many years, sang in the choir for more than 50 years, was a member of the PCC, and was often to be seen keeping the churchyard in order. He was also a member of the local branch of the RSPCA and volunteered for many tasks within the organisation, latterly homing dogs. He loved animals and was passionate about their welfare. In his civilian life, dogs were his constant and well beloved companions.

The best word that sums up Ted, my husband and our father, is 'loyal' – he was loyal to everything and everyone he held dear.

***Ruth Johnson, Suzanne Chappell,  
Ronnie Timmer and Marianne Va***

To read more about Ted's wartime experiences click [HERE](#)