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# MAJOR GENERAL F. W. BURCH

A short biography of Major General Frederick Whitmore BURCH, C.S.I., C.I.E., M.C.; an officer in the British Army between 1914 and 1917 and the British Indian Army from 1917 until 1946.  
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## Major General Frederick Whitmore BURCH, C.S.I., C.I.E., M.C.

Major General Frederick Whitmore BURCH, C.S.I., C.I.E., M.C. was an officer who joined the British Army in 1914 and transferred to be granted a Regular Commission in the Indian Army in 1917. He served in the British Indian Army until his retirement in 1946. During the Second World War he held staff appointments, despite never attending the Staff Course. Immediately after the war, he organized the Victory Celebrations in Delhi in March 1946.

Frederick Whitmore BURCH, who was known as 'Eric', was born on 1 November 1893. He was educated at Framlingham College, Suffolk. After completing his education, he moved to York and joined the York Troop on the East Riding of Yorkshire Yeomanry. The outbreak of the Great War in August 1914 saw a twenty-year-old BURCH mobilized with his troop for service overseas. On 12 October 1914, he was granted an Emergency Commission in the 12<sup>th</sup> (Hull) Battalion, The East Yorkshire Regiment. This was a war raised service battalion intended for service with the British Expeditionary Force. The battalion was sent to France, with BURCH being promoted to the rank of Temporary Lieutenant on 26 May 1915. In 1916, he was awarded the Military Cross. His citation was published on 9 January 1917:

*For conspicuous gallantry in action. He visited all the strong points established in the enemy's lines and assisted in their consolidation. Later, he assumed command and carried out his work with great courage and determination.'*

At some time during the war, the battalion was transferred from France to Egypt. BURCH applied to transfer to the Indian Army on a Regular commission, and this was granted (on probation) with effect from 24 September 1917. His seniority in the Indian Army was dated from 12 July 1916 and he was granted the rank of Lieutenant. On 15 April 1918, he was promoted to the rank of Acting Captain whilst attached to the 7<sup>th</sup> Gurkha Rifles and commanding a company. He relinquished the rank of Acting Captain on 19 July 1918, but he was re-granted that rank on 23 September 1918. The following day, his transfer to the Indian Army was confirmed and he was formally posted to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Bn. 7<sup>th</sup> Gurkha Rifles.

BURCH left Egypt with his regiment and during 1919 served in the Third Afghan War. His promotion to the rank of Captain was granted with effect from 10 July 1919, and he settled into regimental duties. His first staff appointment came on 5 April 1927 when he was posted as a Staff Captain in the Baluchistan District. He left that post on 30 September 1929 and transferred to the post as Deputy Assistant Adjutant-General the next day. He left that post on 5 April 1931 on completing four years on the staff and returned to regimental duties. In the meantime, he had been promoted to the rank of Brevet Major on 11 July 1930.

BURCH was promoted to the rank of Major on 10 July 1933 and about this time he transferred to the 18<sup>th</sup> Royal Garhwal Rifles. He was appointed a Deputy Assistant Quarter-Master General at Army Headquarters, India, on 12 December 1936. He was promoted to the rank of Brevet Lieutenant Colonel on 1 January 1938. With the outbreak of the Second World War, and now aged forty-five years, BURCH was probably considered too old for the operational command of a battalion, and he moved to the post as Assistant Military Secretary to the Commander-in-Chief of the Army in India on 1 November 1939, his forty-sixth birthday. He left the post as Assistant Military Secretary on 31 October 1940, and again on his birthday, he was appointed an Assistant Commandant at the Indian Military Academy, Dehra Dun, India.

On 15 March 1941, BURCH was promoted to the substantive rank of Lieutenant Colonel and on the same day to the rank of Acting Colonel. He was also appointed a General Staff Officer, 1<sup>st</sup> Grade at General Headquarters (G.H.Q.), at Delhi. This started a period of service at G.H.Q., The Army in India. He joined the Directorate of Staff Duties, which was responsible for general organization and military efficiency. On 15 September 1941, BURCH was promoted to the rank of Temporary Colonel. On 8 December 1941, he was promoted to the rank of Acting Brigadier and appointed a Deputy Director in the same Directorate.

On 21 November 1942, he was promoted to the rank of Acting Major General to replace Major General KIRBY as the Director of Staff Duties at G.H.Q. India. He was promoted to the substantive rank of Colonel on 7 April 1943 and to the rank of Temporary Major General on 5 October 1943. BURCH was made a Companion of the Order of the Indian Empire (C.I.E.) on 1 January 1944 in the New Year's Honours List for his service as the Director of Staff Duties.

BURCH left G.H.Q. India on 3 April 1944 on being appointed the Head of the Indian Army Liaison Mission to the Middle East. He remained in the Middle East until the end of the war when he returned to India. He was chosen to organize India's Victory Celebrations in New Delhi held on 7 March 1946.



*The Colour Parties lead troops through the Memorial Arch in New Delhi on 7 March 1946.*

Eric BURCH was awarded the honour of Companion of the Most Exalted Order of the Star of India (C.S.I.) for organizing the victory celebrations. With no further employment available, and at fifty-two years of age, BURCH retired from the Indian Army on 9 October 1946. After his retirement, BURCH was appointed the Chief of Staff and Commander-in-Chief of the Baroda State Forces. The state of Baroda merged with the Republic of India on 1 May 1949 making BURCH's post redundant as the States Forces were absorbed by the Indian Army.

BURCH moved to the United Kingdom and settled at The Wall House, Dedham, near Colchester, Essex. He was the Area Controller of Civil Defence for North-East Essex. He held this post from 1950 until 1964. In 1956 he was appointed a Deputy Lieutenant in the County of Essex. Between 1959 and 1963, he was also the Chairman of Lexden and Winstree Rural District Council.

Eric BURCH married Marigold ALLEN in 1929 and they had one son and one daughter. His son, Nigel Frederick D'Ewes BURCH also joined the Army where he reached the rank of Captain. Marigold BURCH died in 1977, and Eric BURCH died on 20 December 1977.

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