

Cheltenham & Gloucester Branch
of
The Western Front Association

Remembering one of Gloucestershire's Fallen



Second Lieutenant William Rufus Kennard Heath
1st Battalion Gloucestershire Regiment

(William) Rufus Kennard Heath (born in 1886) was one of five children born to William and Annie Heath of Kingswood House, near Wotton-under-Edge. His father was, for 16 years, the manager of the Co-operative Bank in Gloucester.

Rufus was educated at Katherine Lady Berkeley's Grammar School, Wotton-under-Edge and obtained a commission into the 3rd Battalion, Gloucestershire Regiment on 24 February 1915.

He arrived in France in November 1915, following the Battle of Loos and transferred to the 1st Glosters. The battalion remained in the Loos sector during the hard winter of 1915/16.

At 7pm on 25 February 1916 an allied mine was exploded under Hart's crater (itself an older mine

crater). Second Lieutenant Heath was ordered to take a bombing party up to the lip of the new crater. Whilst doing so he was killed, probably by fire from a German trench mortar or rifle grenade. His body was retrieved following the action and was buried in St Patrick's Cemetery, Loos.

Rufus was 29 years old when he was killed and he is commemorated on the Katherine Lady Berkeley's School Roll of Honour and also the Wotton-under-Edge War Memorial.

In 1936, in memory of their son, Rufus' parents paid for the installation of electric lighting in St Mary's Parish Church, Kingswood, a village adjacent to Wotton-under-Edge.