

Cheltenham & Gloucester Branch
of
The Western Front Association

Remembering one of Gloucestershire's Fallen



Lance Corporal William John Boulton (2230)
Royal Gloucestershire Hussars (B Squadron 1st Troop)

William (Bill) John Boulton was born on 18 March 1890 in Sheepscombe. His parents were Susan and John Boulton and he had two sisters, Isabel and Susan. Bill attended Sheepscombe School from 1894 to 1904.

His father, John, was a journeyman baker and before the Great War the Boultons ran a family bakery at the Croft and had a dairy in the same building. Harry Boulton (an uncle) ran the farm and delivered the dairy products. Bessie (Bill's aunt) and Isabel (Bill's sister) did the baking. Bill delivered the bread in a pony and cart including delivery to Painswick. By 1914 it is probable Bill was farming.

Bill joined the Yeomanry (Royal Gloucestershire Hussars) in August 1914 and was sent to Egypt in

February 1915. He took part in the famous dismounted yeomanry charge at Suvla Bay where he had the stock of his rifle blown away. On Easter Day in 1916 he was wounded in the leg and was for some months in hospital recovering from the wound and other injuries. He re-joined his troop in Autumn and was killed in action at the Battle of Rafa, Egypt on 9 January 1917, aged 26.

He is buried in the Kantara War Memorial Cemetery, Suez, Egypt and listed on the College Green memorial in Gloucester.

A battle report said "A small force of mounted troops attacked the strong Turkish positions on 9 January 1917. After a 'brilliant little fight', the defences were stormed and the garrison

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surrendered. About 200 Turks were killed and over 1,600 taken prisoner; the British lost only 71 men.

His commanding officer (Major A J Palmer) wrote to Bill's parents: "*After a long night march the enemy was located in a very strongly entrenched position and the Regiment had a very severe task to perform. You will have heard by now of the success of the engagement, and my only*

regret is the loss of the brave who gave their lives and the wounded. May it be of some consolation to you to know that your son died a true soldier's death, fighting, most gallantly for his King and country."

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Bill Boulton (foreground left) in his school playground circa 1901-1904. Two others in this photograph, Percy Crosswell (third from left) and George Fern (background right) were also killed in the war.