

Cheltenham & Gloucester Branch
of
The Western Front Association

Remembering one of Gloucestershire's Fallen



Major Henry Sullivan Becher
2nd Battalion, King Edward's Own Gurkha Rifles

(Henry) Sullivan Becher was born in India on 9 April 1876, the only son of Lieutenant Colonel S E and Mrs C A Becher, of Kingswood House, Wotton-under-Edge.

He was educated at Marlborough College and the Royal Military College, Sandhurst and was gazetted as a 2nd Lieutenant in January 1896, joining the 2nd Battalion Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, in India, in April of that year.

One year later he transferred to the Indian Army, joining the 2nd Gurka Rifles. He saw service in a number of campaigns in northern India, including the North West Frontier and for a time served as ADC to the Commander in Chief of the Indian Army. Several promotions were attained over the years and he became a Major on 22 January 1914. An enthusiastic sportsman, he represented the Regiment at polo on several occasions.

At the outbreak of war the 2nd Gurkha Rifles were posted to France and on 2 November 1914 the battalion was in action in the Neuve Chapelle area. In *The Indian Corps in France* by Merewether and Smith, there is a description of how Sullivan Becher met his death that day: *One shell blew four men into the air, with the debris of the parapet, rifle and a machine gun and killed Lieutenant Lucas while rallying his men. At the same time Major Becher was killed while trying to get his men back to the cover of an old trench.*

Major Becher's body was not recovered from the battlefield until May 1915, when he was buried near to where he had fallen. The grave was lost in subsequent fighting and he is now commemorated on the Neuve Chapelle Indian Memorial to the Missing and also on the Wotton-under-Edge War Memorial.

(Taken from *First World War Heroes of Wotton-under-Edge* by Bill Griffiths)