



CHELTENHAM & GLOUCESTER BRANCH of THE WESTERN FRONT ASSOCIATION

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Welcome

On 13 July Bob Brunsdon is giving a talk on the Battle of the Somme. It takes place at the Hardwicke and District Branch Royal British Legion Club, Green Lane, Hardwicke, Gloucester GL2 4QA at 7.30pm.

The Soldiers of Gloucestershire Museum are staging a special exhibition focusing on the role played by the Gloucestershire Regiment in the Battle of the Somme. This will include some fascinating objects from the battlefield as well as the stories of some of the key players. There will be a special focus on Carton de Wiart, Commanding Officer of 8th Glosters at the Somme, who was awarded the Victoria Cross for his actions on 3 July. The exhibition runs until 18 November.

The National Archives has announced that all of their unit war diaries for the Western Front (WO 95) have now been digitised. For the first time you can research every diary, including all that relate to the Somme, and download online. Searching the records is free but there is a small



Joe Devereux laying a wreath on behalf of the branch at the Thiepval Memorial on 1 July

charge to download digital copies. Also, selected from and inspired by their collection, there is a selection of podcasts, videos and blogs all focusing on the Battle of the Somme and its effects.

Peter

Future meetings

Tuesday, 9 August 2016
British and German Aerial Bombing
John Peaty
National Star College at 7:30pm

German bombing of Britain, and especially London, first by airships and then by aircraft, caused considerable alarm. It ultimately led to the creation of the Royal Air Force and in particular the Independent Force under Trenchard, which undertook the bombing of Germany.



This plaque can be found on the building at 61 Farringdon Road, London - today called the Zeppelin Building

Tuesday, 13 September 2016
Fighting Spirit: Patrolling and Raiding with the West Yorks 1917-18
Fraser Skirrow
National Star College at 7:30pm

This talk examines the development of patrolling and raiding in a West Yorkshire battalion. It looks at the effect on fighting abilities using contemporary maps and Royal Flying Corps recce photos, and features examples of real patrol experiences.



An observer of the Royal Flying Corps in a BE2c reconnaissance aircraft demonstrating a C-type aerial reconnaissance camera fixed to the side of the fuselage

Second Lieutenant Edward Vick DCM 8th Battalion, Gloucestershire Regiment

Edward Vick was born in Cheltenham on 12 November 1888 to Benjamin and Elizabeth Vick who lived at 17 Fairview Road, Cheltenham. He was educated at All Saints' School, Cheltenham.

On 7 September 1914 he enlisted into the 10th Battalion Gloucestershire Regiment which was forming at Horfield Barracks, Bristol. The battalion later trained on Salisbury Plain before being stationed for training at Cheltenham, the HQ being situated at Lansdown Crescent. It was at this time he was promoted to Lance Corporal instructing his comrades in the use of the bayonet. In May 1915, the battalion returned to Salisbury Plain for intensive field training attached to 26th Division prior to moving to France on 8 August 1915.

On arrival in France the battalion joined the 1st Infantry Brigade, part of 1st Division, in preparation for the attack at Loos which began on 25 September 1915. On this day the battalion attacked in the direction of Hulloch but at Bois Carre the battalion suffered many casualties and were almost brought to a halt, the remnants fighting on towards Hulloch with only 60 men able to continue. Edward Vick managed to survive the battle and continued to serve with the battalion up to and including the Somme Offensive.

In the autumn of 1916, Corporal Vick, as he was then, was involved in an incident near Martinpuich, High Wood and Mametz Wood, when the battalion's trenches were put under a heavy barrage by German artillery causing two officers and three men to be buried. Corporal Vick managed to rescue these personnel and was subsequently awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal which was promulgated in the London Gazette published on 20 October 1916. The citation read: *For conspicuous gallantry. A very heavy and continuous barrage was put on our trenches, two officers and three men being buried, and the trench flattened for over 30 yards.*



From The Graphic - Edward Vick is in the centre

He worked for over two hours in this barrage, assisting to dig out and rescue the buried men.

After this, he was promoted to Sergeant Major and recommended for a commission. He was appointed to a Temporary Regular Commission in the Gloucestershire Regiment as a Second Lieutenant and was posted to the 8th Battalion Gloucestershire Regiment on 26 April 1917.

He was serving with the 8th Battalion on 9 July 1917 during the attacks on the German defences called the Oosttaverne Line, east of Wytschaete in Belgium. The battalion was assaulting this line, pushing forward aiming to capture Druid's Farm and Edward was killed in the actions to take the Farm; he was 28 years of age.

Second Lieutenant Edward Vick DCM is buried in Oosttaverne Wood Cemetery. He is commemorated on the Cheltenham War Memorial, on All Saints' Church War Memorial and on the grave of his father in Cheltenham Cemetery.

(Taken from Leaving All that was Dear - Cheltenham and the Great War by J Devereux and G Sacker)

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"When you go home, tell them of us and say, for your tomorrow, we gave our today."