



CHELTENHAM & GLOUCESTER BRANCH of THE WESTERN FRONT ASSOCIATION

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Welcome!

A reminder that on 8 August our meeting will be a special summer social event that will include a barbeque, organised as last year by Trevor Hek, a couple of short talks (I do have a space left for a ten minute talk, so do let me know if you fancy adding to our evening), a raffle (any donations for this gratefully accepted!) and also a couple of added proposals that I have. Firstly a 'show and tell' table for anyone wishing to bring in any personal items that they would like to share with members, and secondly a 'bring and buy' table - the perfect opportunity for you to move on any Great War related books or items to members who may find them of interest. We do hope this will be a popular event and an occasion for us all to spend a little more sociable time together.

Our speaker this evening, Martin Alexander, has brought with him some hardback copies of his book *French Generals of the Great War: Leading the Way* which he is offering for sale at an

excellent discounted price of just £17.50 (as opposed to £25). A veritable bargain I'm sure!

The series of evening talks at the Soldiers of Gloucestershire Museum continues with *Brigadier Patsy Pagan: A Gloucestershire Hero* by Len Evans on 5 July at 7pm. Tickets are £2 for members and £5 for non-members and are available at the museum or online at www.soldiersofglos.com.

If you are visiting the Western Front next month, the Hawthorn Ridge Crater Commemoration ceremony is on 1 July at Beaumont Hamel. All are welcome and attendees should assemble by 7.10am at the Sunken Lane on the D163 to the west of the village to get their rum ration before the ceremony, led by WFA Vice-President, Andy Robertshaw, starts at 7.20am. At the conclusion of proceedings at the Sunken Lane, the gathering will move up to the Crater for another commemoration.

Peter

Future branch events

Tuesday, 11 July
Women in the Great War
Dr Ritchie Wood
The Ed Shed at 7.30pm



British War Effort and the movement towards the emancipation of women.

Tuesday, 8 August
Branch Summer Meeting
The Ed Shed at 7.30pm

A special evening to allow some greater social interaction than normal. There will be a couple of short talks by members along with a barbeque, raffle and an opportunity for members to bring along items for the interest of other members. Enjoy an evening with others sharing your interest in the Great War.



Captain George Rupert Hailstone

1/7th Battalion, Royal Welsh Fusiliers

George Rupert Hailstone was born at Southsea, Hampshire on 20 November 1893. He appears to have been known as Rupert and was one of eight children born to Commander Walter Hailstone RN and his wife Mary Beatrice. The family home was at 21 Lansdowne Terrace, Cheltenham.

Rupert attended Glengarth Preparatory School, Bromsgrove School and Selwyn College, Cambridge, where he obtained an honours degree in Natural History.

He had joined the University Officers' Training Corps in 1912 and on 2 September 1914 was gazetted as a Second Lieutenant into the 1/7th Battalion of the Royal Welsh Fusiliers (RWF). Promotion to Lieutenant followed in July 1915, around the time his battalion set sail for the Dardanelles. The battalion took part in the landings at Suvla Bay in August 1915 and Rupert remained on the Gallipoli Peninsular until the battalion's evacuation to Egypt in December of that year. 1916 saw the battalion deployed to Palestine and in January 1917 Rupert was promoted to Captain. The 1/7th RWF was part of 158 Brigade, 53 (Welsh) Division and for the greater part of 1917 Rupert acted as Divisional Gas Officer, returning to his battalion in the September.

Having defended the Suez Canal against Ottoman attacks during 1915-16, British and ANZAC forces mounted a series of offensives in the Spring of 1917 to drive them north into



Palestine. The following June saw the arrival of Edmund Allenby as GOC and his brief was to drive the Ottoman forces north and to capture Jerusalem. Between the 27 October and 16 November attacks were made on the Ottoman defence line between Gaza and Beersheba. The latter was captured on 31 October and its garrison had withdrawn to defensive positions about 10 miles north of the town. An important position was the high ground of Tel-el-Khuweifeh, which dominated the surrounding

desert and was the site of a good water supply. On 6 November, 158 Brigade and the 3rd Camel Brigade mounted a dawn attack, which was partially successful in securing a foothold on the ridge, despite heavy Ottoman counter attacks. This and other actions forced the enemy to abandon the Gaza-Beersheba line and opened the way to Jerusalem, which was captured on 9 December 1917.

The action at Tel-er-Khuweifeh was costly for the 1/7th RWF, who that day lost 64 other ranks and five officers killed, one of whom was Captain Hailstone. There is some evidence that he was buried near to where he fell but his remains now lie in Beersheba War Cemetery, in what is now Israel. Curiously the notice of his death which appeared in local newspapers states that he was killed on 11 November. He is commemorated on a stained-glass window inside St Stephen's Church, Cheltenham.

Graham Adams

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