

# THE BRIDGE

Produced by Elmore Parish Council  
August 2018, Issue SEVENTEEN



## From the Editor

Little did I know when I wrote in the May issue that 'Sumer is Icumen In' that it had also come very much to stay. There has been little or no rain since I wrote that editorial and temperatures have soared higher and higher. Having waited for 42 years for such a summer (the last one like this being in 1976) it has been a joy, although I expect, like me, you have struggled to keep your vegetable and flower gardens watered. I wonder how our farmers are coping? Could this be the subject of an article in the next issue?

In the very first issue of **The Bridge** in June 2014 it was hoped that this publication would stimulate a response from you, the target audience. Although I have received some kind words about this magazine, until now no one has written down their views so the hoped for feature 'Letters to the Editor' has been non-existent. We can now put that right thanks to a letter from Colin Ellis.

This issue sees the final article in John Field's excellent series, 'Lest We Forget'. John has, however, put his fingers to the qwerty again to produce an interesting article about someone who lived in the village, fought in and survived the two World Wars. News of the Guides and Brownies activities has returned after an absence of one issue and all the usual notices of village activities are there too. Read on.

## Letters to the Editor

Dear Sir,

I have read with great interest the series of articles by John Field entitled 'Lest We Forget'. The articles provided interesting family information and military details on former residents of Elmore. John gave details on where those featured fitted into the military structure. For those of us like me who did not qualify or were not inclined to join

up, it is not easy to place where in the structure a regiment or battalion or division, etc fits into the Army. Would it be possible for John to do a short article to explain how the army is structured including rank? This will add so much to the excellent and informative articles that John has published in **The Bridge**.

Colin Ellis, Bacchus, Farleys End.

John Field's Reply

Here is a list of army ranks. I have also included Royal Navy ranks as some are mentioned in the account of Leading Seaman Coe's service recounted in this issue of **The Bridge**. The lowest rank in the Royal Navy is the Rating or Ordinary Seaman, the equivalent of Private in the army Above them are the Non-Commissioned Officers as follows in the table:

Royal Navy (RN)	Army
No equivalent	Lance Corporal (L/Cpl)
Leading Seaman (LS)	Corporal (Cpl)
Petty Officer (PO)	Sergeant (Sgt)
Chief Petty Officer (CPO)	Staff Sergeant (SSgt)
No equivalent	Warrant Officer 2 <sup>nd</sup> Class (WO 2)
Warrant Officer 1 <sup>st</sup> Class (WO 1)	Warrant Officer 1 <sup>st</sup> Class (WO 1)

Note: Some private soldiers in various parts of the army have different titles for their rank, e.g.

- Royal Engineers - Sapper
- Royal Artillery – Gunner
- Guards – Guardsman
- Cavalry/Armoured units – Trooper
- Royal Signals – Signaller
- Others include: Driver, Fusilier, Rifleman and Craftsman

Then there are the Officers who hold the Sovereign's commission

<b>Royal Navy (RN)</b>	<b>Army</b>
Acting Sub Lieutenant (A/S/Lt)	Second Lieutenant (2Lt)
Sub Lieutenant (S/Lt)	Lieutenant (Lt)
Lieutenant (Lt)	Captain (Capt)
Lieutenant Commander (Lt Cdr)	Major (Maj)
Commander (Cdr)	Lieutenant Colonel (Lt Col)
Captain (Capt)	Colonel (Col)
Commodore (Cdre)	Brigadier (Brig)
Rear Admiral (R Adm)	Major General (Maj Gen)
Vice Admiral (V Adm)	Lieutenant General (Lt Gen)
Admiral (Adm)	General (Gen)
Admiral of The Fleet (Adm of The Fleet)	Field Marshal (FM)

### **British Army Formations**

What's the difference between a Platoon and a Brigade – the sort of burning question you all want to ask but feel it may show a lack of knowledge about our gallant Armed Forces. So here is the answer which might be of use at the next pub quiz!

A Section – the smallest group of soldiers, roughly 8 soldiers, normally commanded by a Corporal. In armoured units a single tank and its crew is the equivalent of a section.

A Platoon – comprises 3 or 4 sections, roughly 30 men, commanded by an officer (2Lt, Lt or even a Captain). In armoured, engineers this formation is called a Troop.

A Company – comprises 3 or 4 platoon/troops – varies in size from 100 to 150 soldiers. Normally commanded by a Major. The equivalent formation in armoured and engineer units is a squadron and in artillery units it is called a battery.

A Battalion or Regiment – comprises 3, 4 or even 5 companies/squadrons. Varies in size from 600 to 1000 soldiers. In armoured, artillery and engineer units the equivalent is a regiment. Commanded by a Lieutenant Colonel.

A Combat team – a composite grouping or mix of different disciplines – usually smaller than a battalion.

A Battle Group – a battalion sized group of all arms to meet a specific role

A Brigade – normally comprises units from different disciplines, e.g. 2 x infantry battalions, an armoured regiment, an engineer regiment and an artillery regiment. Could be up to 3000+ soldiers. Commanded by a Brigadier.

A Division – comprises 3 or 4 brigades and can be armour or infantry with supporting logistic, engineer and artillery units. Can be 12,000 - 15,000 strong. Commanded by a Major General (2-star)

A Corps – comprises 3 or more divisions with supporting elements of logistic, engineer and artillery. Commanded by a Lieutenant General (3-star).

An Army – 2 or more Corps sized formations. Commanded by a General (4-star).

I Hope this clears up the confusion.

John Field

## **ELMORE WI**

Meetings held at Village Hall on 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of the month at 7.30pm.

The August meeting will be held at the ANCHOR starting at 7.00pm to include Supper and Skittles. ALL ARE WELCOME.

September's meeting will be a talk by Alex Stanbrook called 'Hilarious Hats'.

October's is entitled 'Midwife, Herbalist Surgeon, Witch', by Jemma Foulkes.

Members recently enjoyed a coach trip to Lacock Village and Abbey  
Several members took part in a pottery day, all making a vase or bowl  
with some great success.

If any of these items wetted your appetite, come and join us we are  
always up to something and you will be very welcome

## **THE WI RECIPE. BARA BRITH**

3ozs currants, 3ozs sultanas, 3ozs butter, 2ozs mixed peel 2 beaten  
eggs, ½ teaspoon ground mixed spice, 3ozs soft brown sugar, 12ozs self  
raising flour, warmed honey to glaze.

**1** place currants and sultanas in a saucepan with 3½ ozs of water,  
simmer gently for 15 mins, drain and cool for 15mins.

**2** put cooled fruit, butter and peel in a bowl and mix, with beaten eggs  
and sugar and spice and flour. Mix well

**3** grease and line 2lb loaf tin, put the mixture in and smooth the top.

**4** bake temp gas 2, electric 150, fan 130 for 50 -70mins.

**5** when cooked cool in tin for 15 mins

**6** when completely cool, glaze with warmed honey.

Delicious spread with butter and served with a cup of tea.

## **1<sup>st</sup> Elmore Guides**

This term 1<sup>st</sup> Elmore Guides have been doing lots of activities outdoors  
and we have welcomed five new girls who have taken their promise  
with us – Welcome and Well Done! We have been fishing in Saul  
which saw last year's winning Patrol keep hold of the trophy. We have  
also had a walk along the canal and had an evening outdoor cooking  
where we all cooked sausages and eat s'mores (chocolate digestive  
biscuits with a gooey marshmallow in the middle). We have had two  
camps both at Deer Park, Cowley, one was as a unit when we  
completed our Campers Badge and the other saw us take part with over  
180 Guides in Bubbs Hill Bash organised by Girl Guiding  
Gloucestershire. Over half term we was our District Science Day hosted  
by Cheltenham Science Group, where we took part in activities with  
other Brownie and Guide units in the area. To finish our term we  
celebrated with 1<sup>st</sup> Elmore Brownies and 1<sup>st</sup> Elmore Senior Section at

Robinswood Hill. We also saw our Leader, Louise take her promise on this evening – Well Done Louise!

## **1<sup>st</sup> Elmore Senior Section**

We have been enjoying the lovely weather this term and have done lots of activities outdoors. We have had an outdoor cooking evening and played a game of rounders. Our favourite evening was when we went fishing at Saul; we got to fish on the big lake and use different types of rods. We welcomed three new girls who took their promise on camp – Welcome and Well Done! To finish our term we celebrated with 1<sup>st</sup> Elmore Brownies and 1<sup>st</sup> Elmore Guides at Robinswood Hill,

*If your daughter is interested in joining 1st Elmore Guides or 1<sup>st</sup> Elmore Senior Section please call Catherine (01452) 722444*

## **1<sup>st</sup> Elmore Brownies**

We started the term with our Out and About Badge, which included a hike along the River Severn. The girls did a badge night where they choose a badge to complete and brought in their items for testing. We did an outdoor challenge evening, where we worked in groups to build a support for carrying a watermelon without dropping it. We had a weekend Pack Holiday at Deer Park, Cowley with the theme SWEbots in the Water (a STEM challenge by South West Region). To finish our term we celebrated with 1<sup>st</sup> Elmore Guides and 1<sup>st</sup> Elmore Senior Section at Robinswood Hill where we had an enrolment and welcomed a new Brownie. We have also welcomed three new Brownies who have transferred into the unit - Welcome!

*If your daughter is interested in joining 1<sup>st</sup> Elmore Brownies please call Brown Owl, Jenny (01452) 72244*

## **Lest We Forget**

This is the concluding part of John Field's excellent account of the Elmore men who were killed in the two World Wars  
The Editor

### **Leading Seaman Albert Nathan Leslie Coe RN**

Albert Coe did not come from a traditional Elmore family, or even a Gloucestershire one for that matter, but was born on 13<sup>th</sup> September

1913 in Trealaw, Glamorgan, South Wales. It would appear that he moved to the Gloucester area to find work in the mid 1930s and was first listed as '*living near Elmore Farm*' in the Electoral Rolls of 1935/36, when aged 22/23.

In December of 1938 he married Ava Minnie Amelia Tibbits (1908 – 1994) and moved to Elmore Back but by 1939 he was listed as living at the Old Stonebench Inn. At the time of their marriage in Elmore Church, Ava Tibbits' occupation in the Parish Register was shown as 'domestic servant' and although she was born in Gloucester and her family lived there, she was listed as being an Elmore resident, probably because she worked here as a residential domestic servant.

It is highly likely that Albert Nathan Leslie Coe was conscripted in 1939 as he was then aged 26, and joined the Royal Navy. He was allocated the serial number D/JX 206237.

Leading Seaman Albert Coe RN died at sea on 26<sup>th</sup> November 1940 aboard a French vessel named Medoc - but why was he on board a French vessel in the first place?

Following the invasion of France by Germany in 1940 and the retreat from Dunkirk by the Allies, France signed The Second Armistice at Compiègne with Germany on 22nd June 1940. France, the only continental ally of Britain during WW2, was then replaced by a government administered from Vichy, which inherited the French navy (Marine Nationale). Of particular significance to the British were the seven battleships of the Bretagne, Dunkerque and Richelieu classes, the second largest force of capital ships in Europe after the Royal Navy. The British War Cabinet was already fearful that the Vichy French government would hand the ships to the German Kriegsmarine, giving the Axis a distinct advantage in the Battle of the Atlantic. Admiral François Darlan, commander of the French Navy, promised the British that the fleet would remain under French control but Winston Churchill and the War Cabinet judged that the fleet was too powerful to risk an Axis take-over.

The British tried to persuade the French authorities in North Africa to continue the war, or alternatively to hand over the fleet based there to British control. In an attempt to secure the French fleet in North African ports a British admiral visited Oran on 24<sup>th</sup> June, and on 27<sup>th</sup> June, Duff Cooper, the British Minister of Information, visited Casablanca. At that

time the French Atlantic ports were already in German hands. The British meanwhile needed to keep the German surface fleet out of the Mediterranean, to confine the Italian fleet to the Mediterranean and to blockade the Vichy ports in France.

The Admiralty was against an attack on the French fleet, since if not enough damage were done to the ships, Vichy France would be provoked into declaring war and the French colonial empire as a result could become more hostile to the Free French Forces. Given the need to keep the Atlantic approaches open, and given the fact that the Royal Navy lacked the ships to provide a permanent blockade on the Vichy naval bases in North Africa, the risk of having the Germans, or the Italians, seize the French capital ships was deemed too great. Because the French fleet in Toulon was well guarded by shore artillery, the Royal Navy decided to attack the French naval ships that were based in North Africa.

The British mounted an attack on the French Naval ships moored in the Algerian port of Mers-el-Kébir on 3rd July 1940, known as the Operation Catapult. The bombardment killed 1,297 French servicemen, sank a battleship and damaged five ships, for a British loss of five aircraft shot down and two crewmen killed.

After the attack at Mers-el-Kébir and the subsequent Battle of Dakar in September of 1940, French aircraft raided Gibraltar and the Vichy government severed diplomatic relations with the United Kingdom. The British attack created much rancour between France and Britain but also demonstrated to the world that Britain intended to fight on. The attack was controversial and the motives of the British were discussed long after WW2 but the predominant British motive was thus dire necessity and self-preservation.

Whilst all this was going on, the British under Churchill, decided to take matters in hand and promptly commandeered at gunpoint the French fleet stationed at El Aboukir, near Alexandria, an episode, that even today, still rankles. The Allies then went on to commandeer every other French vessel that it could lay its hands on. One of these was the cargo carrier, The *Medoc*. It was 273 feet long, 34 feet wide with a displacement of 1166 tons. As France fell to the invaders, the *Medoc* escaped and found sanctuary in Plymouth. Unsure about the motives of the French government who still controlled their escaped ships safe in

English ports, she was boarded, along with other French ships in Plymouth, by the Royal Navy on 3<sup>rd</sup> July 1940 to stop the ships falling into the hands of the Germans. Two weeks later she was given to the Polish Navy who had men but no ships; men who had escaped Poland as the Germans invaded, made their way to England and were determined to fight again. Now the ship was named the OF *Medoc*, in Polish 'OF' means Okręt Francuski or 'French ship', so she flew both the French and the Polish national flags. Another change in October put her back in the hands of the Royal Navy and to be known as the training ship FS *Medoc*. The Polish captain remained on board this French ship with a largely British crew, so she sailed under the three flags of France, Poland and Great Britain.

By November 1940 the FS *Medoc* had been operating as a British ship for about six weeks. The captain, Roman Stankiewicz, was Polish but the ship's First Lieutenant William Sobey RNVR, was British, as were the gunnery officer Lt Murray RNVR and a RNVR Lieutenant who was the Navigating Officer. There was a Polish midshipman, a Polish petty officer and two Polish ratings but the remainder of the 87 man crew were British, one of whom was Leading Seaman Albert Coe RN. So there was some confusion about her nationality as she is referred to as both FS *Medoc* and HMS *Medoc* in the official report on her sinking.

On the evening of 26th November 1940 the *Medoc* sailed on her last patrol, leaving Devonport in company with the armed trawler *HMT Lombard* under low cloud and a heavy swell. The *Medoc* was loaded with ammunition, mostly, 3.5 inch shell cases and cordite when she approached the vicinity of the Eddystone on that fateful afternoon. *Medoc* was armed with two 100mm guns mounted in front of the accommodation block on platforms over the forward hold plus two more on platforms over the aft hold. One 37mm anti-aircraft (AA) gun was mounted on the forecabin and another on the stern; there were also two Hotchkiss and two Mitrailleuse machine guns as well as two depth charge throwers and 24 depth charges.

As usual, when on patrol at sea, there was a lookout on the port side of the bridge, one on the roof of the bridge and a signalman on watch on the starboard side. At about 6pm on 26<sup>th</sup> November one of the lookouts saw a twin engine aircraft approaching on the port side, not knowing if this was a friend or foe he immediately sounded the alarm bell which

called the crew to action stations. At the time, both Lt Sobey and the Polish Petty Officer Emyl Moldrzyk were in their cabins, so they quickly rushed up on deck and headed aft to their allotted station by the 37mm AA gun.

The aeroplane was about 500 metres away from the ship and approaching fast when it opened fire with its machine guns and strafed the *Medoc*. Once he had a clear shot, PO Moldrzyk opened fire with the Hotchkiss as the plane crossed the bow of the ship and headed away. Having picked his target, the German pilot circled round and headed back towards the ship, he dropped a torpedo into the water and flew away out of range of the guns. The crew on deck could see the torpedo streaking through the water towards them so a few leapt over the side and into the sea, but PO Moldrzyk and Lt Sobey stayed at their guns, firing continuously at the aircraft. The hull shuddered violently as the torpedo struck the port side of the ship and exploded, blowing a huge hole in the boiler room and enveloping the whole ship in smoke. Only moments before, both the First Lieutenant and the PO had been secure in the warmth of their cabins but now they were in deadly peril on a rapidly sinking ship. The time between the alarm sounding and the torpedo explosion had been just four minutes.

Sobey's first thought was about the depth charges so he ordered them to be made safe, the charges were armed and ready when the ship was on patrol; therefore they would explode when they came under pressure if the ship sank to the bottom. That order given, Sobey commanded the crew to abandon ship. The men threw rafts overboard and launched the lifeboats just before the ship lurched violently and her bow went down, tipping the forecastle under water. PO Moldrzyk jumped over the side, he grabbed a piece of wood floating nearby and paddled over to a raft, climbing on top he dragged another nine sailors and a PO onto it with him.

The armed trawler *Lombard* that was escorting *Medoc* saw the explosion so headed to the scene at full speed; *Lombard* signalled '*Can I be of assistance to you*' to which the reply from *Medoc* was simply '*Help*'. *Medoc* swiftly disappeared beneath the waves as *Lombard* approached at speed. Suddenly, a severe explosion from deep underwater shook the trawler, so *Lombard's* captain prudently steered away when he realised that this was caused by *Medoc's* depth charges

exploding. It seems that not all of the charges had been made safe and those still armed were detonating when they reached their pre-set depth. Three more huge explosions followed in quick succession which caused casualties amongst the survivors floating in the water above the wreck. *Lombard* stood off and picked up three men while waiting for the explosions to stop, before heading for the middle of the floating wreckage and picking up many more. The last man rescued was Lt Sobey who was nearly missed in the fading light; they got him on board with great difficulty as he was suffering from internal injuries caused by the depth charge explosions underneath him. The first explosion damaged *Lombard* and caused leaks in the forward hold, but fortunately the damage was not severe as the captain had moved the ship away from a position above the subsequent explosions.

The only surviving officer from the ship was the First Lieutenant, William Sobey. From a complement of 87 officers and men, 39 lost their lives including the Polish Commander (1st Class) Stankiewicz, Lt Terence O'Shanohun RNR, T/Lt. Herbert J. Murray RNVR, 36 British ratings, (including Albert Coe) a Polish Midshipman and a Polish Leading Seaman.

Leading Seaman Albert Nathan Leslie Coe was one of the 36 British sailors who died at sea on that fateful evening of 26<sup>th</sup> November 1940. His name is commemorated on the Royal Naval memorial in Portsmouth and also appears on the Elmore War Memorial.

Albert's wife, Ava Minnie Amelia Tibbitts, continued to live in the Old Stonebench Inn after he died until around 1948 and at some stage moved to Devon and did not appear to remarry.

## **Harvest Supper Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> October 2018**

Harvest Supper in aid of Church Funds will be held on 6<sup>th</sup> October at Elmore Village Hall.

The Tickets will be £12.00 available from Jennifer Watts 720233 and Jill Hurran 720539

Please bring your own drinks.

# Village Christmas Lunch Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> Dec 2018

A traditional Christmas Lunch will be held at Elmore Village Hall on Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> December in aid of Church Funds. Tickets will be £23.00 and will be available from Jennifer Watts 720233 and Jill Hurran 720539. Please reserve your tickets early to avoid disappointment for this popular event.

## Walking for Health

Forthcoming walks - for your diaries - are on Thursday August 16th, Wednesday September 12th and Thursday October 18th.

For more information, please contact:

Nick on 01452 740265, email: [nandanailsworth@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:nandanailsworth@yahoo.co.uk) or  
Keith on 07811 123700, email: [kparry61@icloud.com](mailto:kparry61@icloud.com)

Nick Peters - walk leader

## VILLAGE HALL NEWS

As some of you will be aware, new aluminium doors have been fitted to the main entrance of the Hall. This has been made possible by a generous donation from Elmore Parish Council. The doors replace the metal framed doors (recycled) fitted to the entrance extension 40 years ago! Modern doors provide enhanced security and insulation, they are a welcome improvement to our Hall. **On behalf of the Village Hall Committee, many thanks to the Parish Council and residents of Elmore.**

Following their sell out visit last year, **JAZZ FRIDAY** will perform again on Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> October. (full details elsewhere in this issue).

Demand for space in our Hall is steadily increasing. Consequently, early bookings (or enquiries) are advisable. I look forward to hearing from you - 01452 721798 or [pikelett@hotmail.com](mailto:pikelett@hotmail.com).  
Many thanks to all users and supporters of the Hall.

John (Hardisty), Chairman

## **Patient Participation Group (PPG)**

**BEFRIENDING SERVICE** Helping to ensure that all of our neighbours stay safe and well.

We have a Befriending service in the area, where an older person is matched with a ‘befriender’, someone who pops in for a cup of tea and a chat around once a week, to provide friendly conversation and companionship ... and perhaps a little practical help.

Do you know someone who is lonely, or are you in need of befriending?

Or do you have just an hour free every week to make a real difference to someone’s life?

Please get in touch by emailing: [myppg@framptononsevern.com](mailto:myppg@framptononsevern.com) or by calling 741988.

The Patient Participation Group (PPG) is a group of patients working with Frampton’s GP surgery to help improve services. We want better to understand your needs, priorities and issues, so we can work together to deliver the highest quality of health care locally.

**WE WELCOME YOUR VIEWS**

*Please give us any feedback or suggestions for improvement - just contact us as above*

## **From the Parish Council**

### **Broadband and the new fibre-optic cable into Elmore**

It has been difficult to keep track of Fastershire’s promises to install a fibre-optic cable throughout Elmore. You may recall from previous editions of **The Bridge** that we have been on the verge of seeing some action for some time – well, we still are! The original plan was for Gigaclear (*the contracted company to install the fibre*) to drill under the canal and we were assured that they had at least 6 different locations

identified for possible crossing sites. In February, and out of the blue, we were told that Gigaclear intended to drill under the River Severn from Minsterworth to Elmore Back. The plan was for the drilling to come up on the Elmore Back side adjacent to Elmore Back Farm. Negotiations proceeded with the landowners on both sides of the River but nothing progressed until we were informed in June that the landowner on the Minsterworth side had refused permission for Gigaclear to access his land. After a flurry of activity a new site was located at the other end of Elmore Back and we await developments!

However, anyone who has travelled to Frampton on the country roads recently may have noticed a certain amount of digging in the area of Epney and Longney - this is the ducting being laid to carry the fibre optic cable – so something is happening.

Everyone in the village has now received a letter from Gigaclear outlining their plans albeit without any great detail. In this letter they promise to post regular updates on the Fastershire website but I have yet to see anything of worth – indeed, it states that the build of fibre in our area is due to start in November 2017!!

I will reiterate what I have stated previously – don't feel obliged to sign-up to any Gigaclear contracts. The fibre optic is being installed regardless of take-up from residents. Although the new fibre cable will give access to super-fast broadband speeds, Gigaclear's installation costs of +/- £200 and their monthly rental of around £40, may well be beyond the budget for some residents. It is not yet clear whether we can get other broadband providers to connect our houses to the fibre.

If I hear of any positive news I will inform those on my database by e-mail.

John Field Chair Elmore PC

# Church Services for Elmore

Unless otherwise publicised the regular service pattern is:

1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of the month – Parish Eucharist at Elmore 9.30am

2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of the month – Evensong at Elmore 4.00pm

5<sup>th</sup> Sunday of the month – no service at Elmore

This autumn there is an additional informal service...

Sunday September 30<sup>th</sup> – St Michael and All Angels  
Cafe Church at Hardwicke Primary Academy 10.45am  
Coffee and Cake with Informal Service – all welcome

The two big social events before the end of the year will be the Harvest Supper and Christmas Lunch. Details of these are given elsewhere in *The Bridge*. As always these are very popular events so make a note in your diary now.

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Baptism (Christening) or Weddings: phone Fr. Andrew 01452 720015  
Email: vicarage@inbox.com      Our Website: [www.elmorechurch.info](http://www.elmorechurch.info)  
Facebook: @ElmoreParishChurch

## **Brigadier William George Hewett OBE, MC**

Following on from my series of stories about men from Elmore who fought and died in WW1 and WW2 (*the last part of which appears in this issue of The Bridge*), it has been remarked to me by several people that it would be interesting to hear about the exploits of people who fought in the wars and survived. Therefore, I have started to compile a few stories of people who lived in the village and survived one of both wars. The first story is about Brigadier William Hewett.

I would welcome any feedback on these stories or even better, information about someone you know in the village who served in the Armed Forces in either WW1 or WW2 and survived.

William Hewett was born in Malvern on 4<sup>th</sup> September 1894 and was the son of Charles William **Hewett** (1858 - 1942) and Mary Anne Ellen **Munn** (1854 – 1946).

He went away from home for his secondary school education and attended Wellington College in Crowthorne, Berkshire.

## **Army Service**

William Hewett joined the British Army prior to the outbreak of WW1 and was commissioned on 25<sup>th</sup> February 1914 and became an officer (2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant) in The 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion The Welsh Regiment. He deployed to France with A Company 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion on SS Braemar Castle, arriving in theatre on 13<sup>th</sup> August 1914 and remained in the front line for the whole of the War.

He served with the Machine Gun Company in his Battalion from August 1914 until December 1915, he then moved to 3<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Brigade from January to July of 1916 before moving to 99<sup>th</sup> Machine Gun Company in support of 2<sup>nd</sup> Division from July to January 1917. He was then promoted to Temporary Major and moved to 15<sup>th</sup> Division as their Machine Gun Officer (MGO), an appointment he held from February 1917 until February 1918. He was then posted to XXII Corps as a General Staff Officer Grade 2 (GSO2), still as a Machine Gun Officer.

He rose quickly through the officer ranks, being promoted to:

- Lieutenant on 17<sup>th</sup> February 1915, (aged 21)
- Captain on 25<sup>th</sup> August 1916 (aged 22)
- Temporary Major in February 1917. *(aged 23) ('Temporary' meaning that he would revert to the rank of Captain once he had finished the current appointment)*

## **Awards and Decorations**

During WW1 William Hewett was awarded the Military Cross (MC) and Bar (*'Bar' means that he received it twice*) for conspicuous acts of bravery, which firstly appeared in the London Gazette for the King's Birthday Honours on 26<sup>th</sup> June 1915 for his actions at The Battle of Givenchy (18-22 Dec 1914) and secondly in the London Gazette on 12<sup>th</sup> February 1917 for his actions during the Battle of Menin Road (20 -25 Sep 1916). He was the first officer of the Welch Regiment to receive the MC.

He was also Mentioned in Despatches (MID) no fewer than 5 times (firstly on 17<sup>th</sup> Feb 1915, secondly on 1<sup>st</sup> Jan 1916, thirdly on 22 Jun 1916, fourthly on 28<sup>th</sup> Dec 1918 and lastly on 5<sup>th</sup> July 1919). (*MID means that the Commander of the formation (Division or Army Group) mentioned a person by name, for some outstanding work or action, in his official despatches (reports) to the UK Government – those who receive a MID are entitled to wear an Oak Leaf on the relevant campaign medal*).

He was also awarded a French medal, The Croix de Guerre.

William Hewett was wounded in the leg at the Battle of Menin Road and was admitted to a Casualty Clearing Station for only one day before returning to his unit.

After the end of WW1 William Hewett, now aged 25, remained in the Army but transferred to the Indian Army Volunteers, leaving that unit in 1930, aged 36 after serving as the Adjutant in that unit. He then re-joined The Welch Regiment.

## **World War 2**

At the outbreak of WW2 in 1939, Major William Hewett was commanding the Depot of the Welch Regiment and was called upon to participate in active service in Europe. Once again he rose quickly through the ranks and reached the rank of Brigadier in 1942 commanding 137<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade.

In 1941, during the War, he was awarded the Order of the British Empire (OBE).

By 1946, now aged 52, he was the District Amy Welfare Officer in Wales.

## **Private Life**

William Hewett married twice. His first wife was Louise Susan Wolfe (1898 – 1985) and they married on 19<sup>th</sup> April 1922 in Balrothy, Dublin, Ireland. Louise was the daughter of an English father, Francis Richard Wolfe (1849 –1900) and an Irish mother, Sophia Rebecca Macmurragh Murphy (1870-1950). This first marriage ended in divorce in 1931.

However before their divorce, William and Louise had a daughter from this union, a Margaret Mary Hewett, who was born in 1924.

William Hewett's second marriage was to Beatrice Donegan (1909 - 1961) on 11<sup>th</sup> June 1932 in Farnham, Surrey. Beatrice was the daughter of Lt-Col James Francis Donegan RAMC (1863-1934) and Amy Sutton (1879 -1963). This second marriage produced a daughter in 1941 named Sarah Hewett. She lived in Cheltenham but died in 1982 aged 41.

The Electoral Records show that in 1959, after he retired from the Army, William Hewett was living in Brockhampton, east of Cheltenham but at some stage he moved to Elmore and lived at Farley Corner in Farley's end with his wife, Beatrice. Sadly she died in Standish hospital in 1961 at the age of 52.

Brigadier William Hewett OBE, MC died on 30<sup>th</sup> April 1973 aged 78 and is buried in the Elmore Church cemetery.

**BIG BAND JAZZ at EVH**  
**With local BIG band**

**Jazz Friday**

**ELMORE VILLAGE HALL**  
**(in aid of Hall funds)**

**Saturday 13 October 2018**  
**(commencing 8.00 pm)**

**Tickets £10 (limited number available)**

**Day bar**

**Nibbles**

**(enquiries and tickets - John 721798)**

**Jazz Friday is a Stroud based big band featuring  
swing, soul, blues, funk and latin jazz with vocalist  
Mim Davies  
(also our own Trevor Jones and Andy Nash!)**

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**First Aid and Defibrillator Training**

**Saturday September 22nd, Elmore Village Hall, 2 - 4 pm**

**Free to Elmore Residents Adults and children welcome**

**If you wish to attend phone 722034 before Sept 19th or contact any  
of the councillors**

<b>Elmore PC</b>			
Chair	John Field	720357	fernhay@btinternet.com
Vice Chair	Nick Meek	750769	nick@archies.me.uk
	Trevor Jones	722034	rosecottage1818@gmail.com
	Paula Turner	729903	paula@mtfx.com
	Jane Hill	728722	enajekim@live.co.uk
Clerk	Dorie Jones	722034	elmore.parish@hotmail.com
<b>Village Hall</b>			
Chair	John Hardisty	721798	pikelett@hotmail.com
Enquiries & bookings	John Hardisty	ditto	ditto
<b>Other Village Organisations</b>			
The Vicar	Fr Andrew James	720015	vicarage@inbox.com
Players	Amy Parkin	0755779011	villageplayers@outlook.com
WI	Val Overton	750591	vj.overton@tiscali.co.uk
Guides	Catherine Hartell	722444	catherine.hartell@gmail.com
Brownies	Jenny Hartell	722444	jharte1276@gmail.com
Bridge Club	Caroline Meek	720383	
Toddlers			
<b>Other Useful Contacts</b>			
Police - non emergency	101		
Member of Parliament, Dr David Drew	02072194106		david.drew.mp@parliament.uk
County Councillor, Stephen Davies	07802595307		stephen.davies2@gloucestershire.gov.uk
District Councillor, Gill Oxley			cllr.gilloxley@stroud.gov.uk
To report Fly Tipping	01453754424		publicspace@stroud.gov.uk
Report abandoned vehicles	01453754379		Abandoned.vehicle@stroud.gov.uk
Gloucs Highways (report potholes etc)			08000 514514
<b>Village Agent</b>			
Christine Lingard	07810630179		
<b>Neighbourhood Warden</b>			
Carol Novoth	07970250343		carol.novoth@stroud.gov.uk
<b>Neighbourhood Officer Police - Kevin Lee</b>	101		<b>kevin.lee@gloucestershire.pnn.police.uk</b>