

## Capt. Arthur Turner MC

---

Arthur Turner was commissioned into the 1/6th Battalion of the Royal Warwickshires, a Territorial Force unit, on 30th October 1909. The 6th met at Thorp Street in Birmingham. He was made a temporary Captain on the 3 November 1914 and joined the battalion at the Front on the 16th June 1915 having been with the 48th Division Staff (the 6th battalion is part of 143rd Brigade and the 48th Division). He was wounded on the 1st July 1916, during the major offensive on the first day of the Somme. He received a Silver War Badge when he was honourably discharged in 1916 (after his injury). He died in 1953/4.

His full name was Arthur Brooke Turner but he went by his father's surname of Turner until he and his younger brother George joined up when he adopted the surname 'Brooke Turner' to avoid any confusion between the two brothers. After the war so many friends knew him from the army that he became known by both names. His sons, Alan and Evelyn Brooke Turner (the latter who died in 1940 in a Spitfire) were christened with the name Brooke Turner. And that's why we're called Brooke Turner, not just Turner, and why it's not hyphenated.



During 1915 Arthur rescued a soldier who had been injured on the front line by dragging him back to safety, presumably at some personal risk, winning in the process the Military Cross, second only to the Victoria Cross for bravery under fire.

On 1<sup>st</sup> July 1916 he and his brother George took part in the first day of the battle of the Somme. As Arthur crossed no-man's-land, either a bomb exploded near him scattering shrapnel, or it may have been a bullet, but whatever it was flew across his front penetrating his tunic at the breast pocket, through his cigarette case, cutting all the cigarettes in half, and exiting without injuring him at all. In fact it was only sometime after the battle when he went to retrieve his cigarette case that he must have realised how close to death he had come that day. Later in the day he wasn't so lucky, being hit by a Dumdum bullet which shattered his leg. Fortunately he was rescued by a Canadian sergeant and taken to a field hospital where his leg was amputated; for the rest of his life Capt. Turner sent that Canadian sergeant a Christmas hamper from Fortnum & Mason in London.

On the same day his brother George had been advancing towards the enemy when he was hit by a bullet which pieced the entire crown of his head, leaving a furrow from the front of his skull to the back, and which had to be covered with a tin plate which remained there for the rest of his life, and presumably is still with him in his grave in New Zealand. For years afterwards he would describe the last thing that he remembered seeing before he was wounded as being a German soldier pointing his rifle directly at him. The surgeon who amputated Arthur's leg was called Turner, and later in the day the same surgeon inserted the tin plate in George's head.

Arthur Turner was brought up in the Birmingham area, possibly from what is now Handsworth. His step brother, perhaps cousin, came from the Brooke family home, apparently near Telford. These three children were a source of immense pride to their families having I think been the first to go to university. The step brother/cousin, I remember my father telling me, had been advancing alongside his best friend Raymond Baldwin on the first day of the Somme too, the then Prime Minister's son, when they were both killed when a shell exploded over them.

JBT

29<sup>th</sup> May 2015