

04 JAN 2012



Wiltshire Historical Military Society

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30th December 2011

Lt Col John McLennan RE
Royal Engineers Association
Brompton Barracks
Chatham ME4 4UG.

Dear Lt Col McLennan,

An unfortunate incident occurred at Imber on Salisbury Plain on 13th April 1942 when 25 Army personnel were killed by 'friendly' fire. This involved a tactical air demonstration of fighter aircraft making low-level attacks on dummy soldiers and stationary army vehicles. The demo was in front of an invited audience of military personnel viewing from a spectator's stand. The weather over the target was fine but hazy, making visibility poor when looking into the sun. When the demo commenced Spitfires of No.234 Sqn made a pass at the targets without firing. This was followed by Hurricanes of No.175 Sqn firing at the targets. The first 5 aircraft engaged the target area but the pilot of the 6th aircraft mistook the spectators stand for the targets and opened fire on his approach. The carnage resulted in the 25 deaths and 71 injuries of various degrees. Brigadier Grant Taylor, Royal Scots Fusiliers, who was standing next to Lt. General Sir Gerald Templar, was just one of the fatalities. Three days after the tragedy, PM Winston Churchill visited to witness a similar demonstration.

Neil for website PL
MCS 4

We as a society are funding a commemorative memorial to the 25 dead to coincide with the 70th Anniversary on 13th April 2012. The memorial is unable to be placed at the actual site of the fatalities as this is now a restricted area but we have received permission to place it inside the Garrison Church in Imber Road, Warminster. It is probable that most of the personnel who attended and witnessed the event are no longer alive or are very aged but we are hoping to invite relatives or friends to attend the dedication and unveiling of the memorial plaque. In this respect we would like to ask your association if they would assist our quest by publicising the event should the membership receive a newsletter or magazine. We are hoping that possibly some of your older members might be able to provide a link to a relative of Major Adrian John Fitzgerald RE who was one of those killed. It is appreciated that he was buried here in Wiltshire at Tidworth Military Cemetery but possibly his place of residence at the time of his tragic death was in Cheltenham.

Any help you are able to provide will be much appreciated and I will of course be happy for my contact details to be used in any publication.

Yours sincerely,

 Rod Riddle
Sec.

**In commemoration of those who were killed in the tragic accident on 13th April 1942
when observing a tactical air demonstration on the nearby Imber Ranges.**

Cpl CVN Blackman RAC

Capt M Brown RA

Bdr WG Connelly RA

Maj GB Davies Home Guard

Maj AJ Fitzgerald RE

2Lt CG Hamilton RA

Lt JC Hawks RAMC

LBdr DC Hodge RA

Lt WL Hodge RA

Dvr CH Kent RASC

2Lt RB Lipman RASC

2Lt KR Matthey Welsh Regt

LBdr I McNeil RA

Fus FVL Parry Royal Welsh Fusiliers

Lt HE Phillips Home Guard

2Lt JC Poole Border Regt

Capt GRG Roberts RA

d 14 April 1942

2Lt HWC Robson CIE OBE Home Guard

d 15 April 1942

Sgt AG Smith RA

Brig RAG Taylor OBE MC

Royal Scots Fusiliers

Cpl E Travers RAC

Lt LG Tunbridge Hampshire Regt

Capt JR West MC Home Guard

Capt FJ Willy Home Guard

Lt RPF Wilson Gordon Highlanders

Death has been swallowed up in victory. 1 Cor 15.54

**WHMS
2011**