

## Edward Bone

*In his War Diary for Oct 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1918. Col H.P. Westmorland, commander of 2/B Hampshire Regt, wrote, in pencil:*

*"Two platoons of X company, under the personal command of Lieutenant G.H. Brown, worked down the banks of the Reutelbeek and succeeded in reaching the Cemetery on the east side of the village. Here they were held up after sustaining heavy casualties until two machine guns that were holding them up on the right, were rushed, with great gallantry, by two men of the leading platoon, resulting in the surrender of 27 of the enemy. The locks of the machine guns were removed and the two men withdrew with their prisoners."*

*Writing a month later, the Colonel recorded:*

*'Awards during the month.*

*The Military Cross – Lieut (a/Capt) G.H. Brown. Distinguished Conduct Medal, 1421 Pte (L/Cpl) E. Bone.'*

East Meon can lay claim to Edward Bone; after the war, the young hero came here from Liss to work at Leydene House. He had married Alice May Richards in 1915, and the couple came to live first in Coombe Bottom and then at Hambledon Lodge at Leydene. When Leydene was requisitioned in World War II as HMS Mercury, Edward worked as a lorry driver and Alice in the NAAFI.

As described in the War Diary, just six weeks before Armistice, Private E. Bone and his platoon commander played a part in unblocking fierce German resistance to the Allied advance through south Belgium, near Ypres. Bone and his commanding officer played a part in relieving two days of heavy bombardment and British losses when they charged two machine gun posts, taking 27 prisoners. No wonder each of the British soldiers was promoted, Lieutenant Brown to Acting Captain, Private Bone to Lance Corporal, and both awarded medals, Brown the MC and Bone the DCM.

The London Gazette, too, gave a description of the action: *"For conspicuous gallantry during operations round Gheluwe on 30<sup>th</sup> September 1918. His platoon being held up, he worked forward and rushed a pill-box, capturing two machine-guns and 27 prisoners. Later, he remained behind with his company commander and provided covering fire until all their ammunition was expended, thus enabling the platoon to withdraw."*

### David Hopkins adds:

The "Acting..." means they were only that temporarily, often because the guy whose job that was was injured or away. They often (usually) got put back down again when the guy reappeared. I think Lieut. Brown was eventually promoted to Captain a few months later.... but CO seems to title him as he fancies on any particular page. Poor old Bone was an acting Lance Corporal....which is pretty lowly!

The actual details of the story are fascinating ...they crept into the town by crawling through a stream with high banks. They then got under fire from the MGs in the cemetery which was nearly out of town the wrong side! They charged the guns at that point. How the two of them took 27 prisoners can only probably be explained by lots of Germans wanting to be prisoners perhaps? (Do read the bit about the "runners" who got lost at dusk and came back with 10 and 8 prisoners apiece). Any way, more Germans arrived at the Cemetery from North and South ...so they legged it whilst Brown and Bone made the newcomers keep their heads down until eventually their ammo ran out. It looks as if both were wounded. It refers to Brown binding up the wounds of Bone ...whilst Brown is on the casualty list but still "at duty". Derring do indeed! Worth using Google Street Walk to go around the village now without leaving the study. Stream and Cemetery easily found.