



General Douglas Haig

“One of the the British Army’s most senior officers had also received his mobilisation order.

At Radway Grange in the shadow of Edge Hill General Douglas Haig had summoned his driver to convey him to Banbury to catch the fast train to London.

The General’s journey to the battle front began in a somewhat inauspicious manner. Despite repeated attempts by his chauffeur the staff car proved quite incapable of making the ascent of Sunrising Hill on the Banbury Road.

After many unsuccessful charges at the slope the solution was found. The lowest gear on the vehicle was engaged – reverse gear! The car was turned round at the bottom of the hill and Haig sped up facing backwards with no doubt a certain loss of dignity.

Douglas Haig set out that morning as Commander of 1 Corp of the British Expeditionary Force. When he returned from the war he would be a Field Marshall, Commander-in-Chief of the Army and in receipt of an Earldom”¹

“After the Armistice the higher ranks were rewarded with knighthoods and peerages whilst the “other ranks” returned to stand in the dole queues if they had been lucky enough to survive intact, whilst the disabled faced the future on pitiful pensions.”²

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¹ Retold from “lest we Forget – The Southam Men in the Great War” by Allan Griffin

² From the book by John Gorman, “To build Jerusalem”