

Memorial in Westminster Abbey: listed as : burial date: 16th October 1747; soldier; North transept, cloisters, east cloister; grave; bust.

In the west aisle of the north transept of Westminster Abbey is a monument to Lt.General Joshua Guest. The monument of white and red marbles was designed by Sir Robert Taylor and unveiled in 1751. There is a bust of the General in Roman armour, with military trophies and palm and laurel branches at the side. His coat of arms shows "azure a chevron argent between three swans' heads erased". The inscription reads:

"Sacred to those virtues that adorn a Christian and a soldier this marble perpetuates the memory of Lieutenant General JOSHUA GUEST who closed a service of sixty years by faithfully defending EDINBURGH CASTLE against the Rebels, 1745. His widow, who lies near him, caused this to be erected".

The General was buried in the East Cloister of the Abbey on 16 October 1747, aged 85 and his widow Sarah died 17 July 1751. He was probably born in Halifax in Yorkshire and his mother Mary was not married. He enlisted in the army and served under King William III in Ireland, and then fought in Spain. In 1735 he became Brigadier General and was governor in Edinburgh during the Jacobite rising.

The monument is currently partly obscured at the base.



Comments:

A cornet was the first level commissioned rank equivalent now to that of 2nd Lieutenant. It was an appointment to a cavalry regiment. With the exception of the Household Division, this rank was abolished in the Army reforms of 1871. This reform also included the abolishment of the purchase

of ranks.

An interesting career in that he was 44 when first commissioned and rose through the ranks to brigadier-general at 75 & then lieutenant general before retirement. At some stage of his life the family became relatively rich as evidenced by the chest tomb built for the Guest/Smith family, these were very expensive and relatively rare. The grave may have been erected anytime between Mary Guest's death in 1729 and the Sammy Smith's death in 1777. The style of carving indicates earlier rather than later. Even if the later date, it predated the next chest tomb by 30 years.

The further indication of wealth is indicated by the cost of his memorial in Westminster Abbey. The honour of being buried and commemorated in the Abbey is also a mark of the Georgian government's PR exercise in strengthening its hold on power following the defeat of the Stuarts.

Will: National Archives.

Memorial: westminster-abbey.org

Ian Philp, March 2016