



## CHELTENHAM & GLOUCESTER BRANCH of THE WESTERN FRONT ASSOCIATION

Number 122

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### Happy Christmas!

As this year comes to the end it gives me the opportunity to reflect on what I believe has been a particularly excellent year for the branch.

Our speakers (booked by Andy Hinks and Brian Ward) have been exemplary and suitably varied in subject matter and the branch tour was once again a huge success for which we owe Bob Brunsdon a great show of appreciation.

For me however the highlight was our tenth anniversary celebration at The Aviator and for that I thank not only everyone who was involved in making that night a success but every single one of you who have made the past ten years possible and so enjoyable.

Tonight we showcase some of the wonderful talent that we are privileged to have in our branch - always a proud and pleasurable evening!

Our talks tonight are:

*The Toowoomba Roll of Honour Board*  
Paul Cobb

*From the Western Front to Salonika*  
(A French soldier writes home 1914-1918)  
Linda Hart

*Two case studies: current research progress on the 42 Australian WW1 war graves in the county*  
Ian Hollingsbee  
*Lost Souls*  
David Tebbutt

A presentation by Colin Hardy

Before you go please pick up our calendar of events for next year - a very exciting schedule, I'm sure you'll agree - and may I take this opportunity to wish you personally a wonderful Christmas and a healthy and happy 2017.

**Peter**

### Future events

**Tuesday, 10 January**

*The Royal Artillery 1914-1915*  
Vern Littley

**National Star College at 7:30pm**

Vern's talk covers the period from Le Cateau through to the end of 1915 when the gunners start to change in regard to direct/indirect fire, understanding weather, doctrine, intelligence, barrages and size etc. He also reviews how the Royal Artillery looked in 1914 and influences/developments from the Boer War onwards, and sets the scene for 1916 and subsequent battles.

**Tuesday, 14 February**

*Munitions Factories in the Great War*  
Nigel Crompton

**National Star College at 7:15pm**

In his talk on munitions factories Nigel includes an introduction to the Ministry of Munitions and where possible details of factories local to the area of the talk, and the role of women in the factories.

*Please note the earlier start. Before Nigel's talk we are holding an auction of all your unwanted Christmas presents! So please bring them along as all proceeds will go towards branch funds.*

**Tuesday, 21 February**

*Meet Tommy Atkins*

**Cheltenham Playhouse**

**Bath Road, Cheltenham GL53 7HG**  
**at 7:45pm**

*On August 4<sup>th</sup> 1914, with the declaration of war between Britain and Germany, reservist Tommy Atkins is immediately called up to serve his country. Within weeks he sees his first action in the fields of France and subsequently experiences the full scale of life in the Western Front trenches of the First World War - the horror, the pain, the misery, the boredom and even the moments of joy.*

This play, written and performed by Peter, details, through the eyes of a simple 'Tommy' the reality of war for those who actually fought it. From the beginning of the war to the end, Private Tommy Atkins was there. This is his story.

The tickets are £10 and can be obtained from the Playhouse Box Office on 01242 522852 or online at [www.cheltplayhouse.org.uk](http://www.cheltplayhouse.org.uk)

This is a fundraising event for the branch so please spread the word.

## 17419 Private Richard Hubert Hanks 10<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Gloucestershire Regiment

Hubert Hanks was born at Painswick on 6 March 1890. Prior to enlistment he was a bricklayer with local builders Burdock & Sons and also a fireman with the local brigade. He played cricket for Painswick and was a bell ringer and chorister at the parish church.

He enlisted at Stroud on 1 January 1915 and joined the 10<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Gloucestershire Regiment. After training in Cheltenham and on Salisbury Plain the battalion was posted to France on 9 August 1915. Six weeks later it was to be in the front line on the opening day of the Battle of Loos, with the objective of taking the German front line near to the Bois Carre and pressing on across the Loos - La Bassee Road to Hulluch. The attack went in at 6.30am but unfortunately the wind had dropped and the supporting British gas hung about the



10<sup>th</sup> Glosters' trenches, causing many casualties. The weakened attack managed to take the German front line but faltered before it could reach the Loos - La Bassee Road.

During the attack Hubert was wounded in the knee and was evacuated to a Base Hospital, where he spent five weeks before being repatriated to a hospital located in the pavilion of Trent Bridge Cricket Ground, Nottingham. On 23 November 1915 surgeons were forced to amputate his leg. He never recovered from the operation and died, eleven days later, on 4 December aged 25, leaving a widow and two young children.

Hubert's funeral took place with 'full fireman's honours' at Painswick Parish Church on 8 December and his body was laid to rest in the town cemetery.

*Graham Adams*

## The WFA Annual Service at the Cenotaph



The pipes and drums of the London Scottish Regiment led the main procession to the Cenotaph. The wreath layers included members of the Royal Navy, Army and Royal Air Force, and students and pupils representing the youth of the nation. After the two minute silence a bugler sounded *Reveille* and the Laying of Wreaths followed. We are very grateful to Helen and Dave Earle who represented the Branch at this service and laid a wreath on our behalf.



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*"When you go home, tell them of us and say, for your tomorrow, we gave our today."*