



CHELTENHAM & GLOUCESTER BRANCH of THE WESTERN FRONT ASSOCIATION

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Welcome!

I am sure that you will be well aware of the Butte de Warlencourt saga - it was announced in October, in an email shot to WFA members, that the National Executive Committee had sold the Butte to past chairman Bob Patterson. I was shocked when I read the announcement - the ensuing response on social media by fellow chairmen and members illustrated that I was not alone. Subsequently the national press have picked up on the story and the Charities Commission are investigating. I do not wish to prejudice your thoughts on this issue but am happy to send opinions on to the National Executive - they have received mine. I shall be discussing the affair at the AGM to which all are welcome (Monday 19 November at 7.30pm) - I do personally believe that it should be thoroughly debated.

A further 1.5 million Pension Records saved by the WFA will be made available on Ancestry during the lead up to the centenary of the Armistice on 11 November. These Pension Record Cards and Ledgers, numbering in excess of 1.5 million, confirm pensions paid to the next of kin of deceased soldiers (and sailors and airmen) or if the combatant survived, the pensions paid to the men themselves. An article

explaining the nature of these records, and other articles on the saving of the pension records are available on the WFA website.

The sculptures *Weeping Window* and *Wave* can be seen at the Imperial War Museum in London until 18 November. *Weeping Window* is a cascade comprising several thousand handmade ceramic poppies and *Wave* is a sweeping arch of bright red poppy heads suspended on towering stalks. Both sculptures were initially conceived as the key dramatic sculptural elements in the installation at the Tower of London.

The Library & Archives Canada has now completed the digitisation of the service records of soldiers who served with the Canadian Expeditionary Force in the Great War and these can be searched (for free!) on line via: www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/military-heritage/first-world-war/personnel-records.

Don't forget to pick up your copy of our 2019 Programme. Once again we have an excellent list of speakers arranged for next year (thanks as always to Andy Hinks) so do pick up a leaflet and feel free to take a handful for friends, relatives or to drop into local libraries or schools etc.

Peter

Future branch events

Tuesday, 11 December
Members' Evening
National Star College at 7.30pm

Please join us for our Christmas meeting when we draw on the expertise and knowledge of our members who will give a selection of ten-minute presentations during the evening. We are still looking for speakers, so please let Peter know if you would like to take part.

We will have our usual Christmas raffle and any prizes you can donate will be very welcome.



Tuesday, 8 January 2019
*The Work of the Joint Casualty and
Compassionate Centre*
Nicola Nash
National Star College at 7.30pm

The Commemorations Team is responsible for undertaking work to identify and bury the remains of recently discovered Service personnel killed in historic campaigns from WW1 onwards. The Joint Casualty and Compassionate Centre co-ordinates efforts to identify remains, working with the host nation, CWGC, Service historic branches and regimental contacts employing records and any forensics recovered at site. Nicola explains the work of the JCCC supported with case evidence and some recovered artifacts to illustrate the attempts to trace surviving relatives and arranging re-dedications.

Driver William George Bartlett MM (40940) D Battery, 58 Brigade, Royal Field Artillery

William George Bartlett was born in the Cotswold village of Winson, Gloucestershire in 1886, the eldest child of Frank and Mary Bartlett. In February 1913 he married Laura Lydia Oatley at Ashton Keynes, Wiltshire and emigrated to Australia soon after, having gained permission of the Army authorities as he was a Reservist.

William had originally enlisted in the Royal Field Artillery (RFA) in 1906, agreeing to serve for twelve years, three with the colours and nine in reserve.

Following the outbreak of war he was recalled from Australia and rejoined the RFA in December 1914 and was sent to join the BEF in France in March 1915. His wife returned to the UK with him.



He served on the Western Front until 23 July 1917 and was awarded the Military Medal. On that day he suffered gun shot wounds to the head and a fractured spine and ended up in No 14 Stationery Hospital, Wimereux. His wounds were severe and he was eventually re-patriated to Tooting Hill Hospital, south London on 7 October 1918, where he died, aged 32, on 19 October 1918, from septicaemia and a fractured spine.

He is buried in a private grave at Quenington (St Swithin) Cemetery.

His wife was repatriated to Sydney, Australia at the end of 1919 as the widow of an Imperial Reservist.

Research by Baden Russell for our Gloucestershire War Graves Project.

Gloucestershire and Racing Remember

At the request of the Lord-Lieutenant of Gloucestershire, and with the support of the sport of Jump Racing through The Jockey Club, a major event will mark the Centenary of the Armistice entitled *Gloucestershire and Racing Remember* which will form part of the November Race Meeting on Sunday 18 November.

The Gloucestershire Regiment in WWI uniform will march in from the Racecourse Railway Station and parade on the racecourse accompanied by a military band. A mounted contingent of the Royal Gloucestershire Hussars will then lead an Act of Remembrance. Weather permitting there will be a simulated dog fight of

WWI era aircraft above the racecourse. There will also be static displays during the day of WWI military hardware and vehicles. We will have a stand in The Centaur and there will also be an exhibition featuring WWI casualty management, medals, uniforms and equipment, Gloucestershire's war poets, the contribution of racing to the war effort, the birth of the RAF, photographs of munitions and aircraft factories, and much more.

Gates open at 10.30am. Tickets are £10 in advance and under 18's entry is free when attending with a full paying adult. Please see www.cheltenham.co.uk for further information.

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