



CHELTENHAM & GLOUCESTER BRANCH of THE WESTERN FRONT ASSOCIATION

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Welcome!

I hope you had a good Christmas and may I wish you a belated Happy New Year. Hopefully you will have received your calendar of events for our talks this year - either in digital or physical form. If you would like additional calendars do feel free to help yourself and do take any for friends that you think would be interested. Furthermore, if you can distribute any to local libraries, community centres, schools or even pubs then please take a good handful, it is important that we keep spreading the word of our talks and existence! As you will have noticed we have yet again, courtesy of Andy Hinks, an excellent array of talks promised us, something for all tastes and interests.

Thanks to your generosity, our Christmas Raffle raised £86 which was donated to Lechlade Village Hall towards a new Roll of Honour, the previous one having been destroyed by fire a couple of years ago.

We are once again calling on donations of any unwanted Christmas presents that you received. We won't be auctioning them this year as we have done in previous years, but shall instead be raffling them at February's meeting, so please do

bring them in ... big or small we'll find homes for all of them!

In November, the WFA released a further 1.5 million digitised Pension Record Cards which amounts to approximately 35 percent of the total archive. These records are now available to WFA members, for free (via the *Fold 3* part of *Ancestry*) through the WFA's own website. There is a short video on the website to guide you through accessing the records.

You may like to know that Peter Jackson's critically acclaimed film *They Shall Not Grow Old* has been released on DVD and is available on Amazon.

An exhibition at the IWM London entitled *Renewal: Life after the First World War in Photographs* explores how the First World War has shaped the society we live in today. A collection of photographs of refugees returning to ruined homes, through the reconstruction of Ypres, to battlefields depicting the villages that 'died for France' and were never rebuilt, they reveal the extent of destruction and change in war-torn Europe and beyond. The exhibition is free and runs until 31 March.

Peter

Future branch events

Tuesday, 12 February

They Shoot Spies - the untold story of the first female agents

Dr Viv Newman

National Star College at 7.30pm

Tuesday, 12 March

From the Good Soldier to the Emperor: The Austro-Hungarian Army 1914-1918

Alan Wakefield

National Star College at 7.30pm



**French secret agent,
Louise de Bettignies**

Moving beyond the stereotypes of Edith Cavell and Mata Hari this talk explores the lives and actions of two Belgian and one French woman whose espionage made a significant contribution to the Allied Cause. One is believed to be the only woman, probably the only person, to have been

decorated by France, Belgium, Britain and Germany.

Despite a generally bad press, and grave problems, this multi-ethnic force remained in the field with its cohesion intact until the final months of the war.



Captain John Stewart de Lisle Bush 41 Squadron, Royal Flying Corps

John Stewart de Lisle Bush was born in 1896, the son of Alfred George and Florence Katherine de Lisle Bush (nee Lysaght). He was the eldest of three sons and a daughter. His father was an iron merchant and the family lived at Eastington Park, Stonehouse, Gloucestershire. John was educated at Cheltenham College and on 8 August 1914 he joined the 3rd Battalion, Somerset Light Infantry (SLI) and arrived in France on 6 September that year.

On 5 November 1914 he received a bullet wound in his right calf and was repatriated to the UK and did not return to the BEF until early 1916, when he was almost immediately admitted to hospital in Boulogne with measles.

Having recovered he returned to the SLI on 1 May 1916 and transferred to the Royal Flying Corps, as a Lieutenant, on 27 July of that year, going on to qualify as a pilot and being promoted to Captain in 1917.



At 5.26am on 25 August 1917 he took off from Lealvillers aerodrome, between Doullens and Albert, flying an Airco DH5 of 41 Squadron, on an offensive patrol. One hour later, over Warlencourt - Selivigny, he encountered an Albatross DV piloted by Major Josef Mai of Jasta 5. He was shot down, this being the second of what eventually would become thirty victories for that officer. He survived the crash but such was the extent of his injuries that he died the next day. Initially he was reported as missing and it was not until 14 December that his family received word, via the Red Cross in Geneva, that he was dead.

Captain John Stewart de Lisle Bush now lies in Honnechy British Cemetery, south west of Le Cateau and is commemorated on the Eastington War Memorial, along with his older brother, Hugh, who died on 17 January 1917, the result of wounds received at Loos in September 1915.

Graham Adams

WFA events

The 8th WFA President's Conference entitled *Reflections on the Great War* will take place on Saturday, 30 March at the Tally Ho! Sports and Social Club, Birmingham B5 7RN. The talks are *Far from Contemptible: Memoirs of the BEF's 1914 Campaigns* by Dr Spencer Jones; *The BEF's Commanders on the Cusp of Victory, September 1918* by Professor John Bourne; *France's Pyrrhic Victory: Military lessons and Political legacies of 1918/1919* by Professor Martin Alexander and *Not quite more of the same: British Officers in two world wars* by Professor Gary Sheffield. There will also be a panel chaired by Peter Simkins. The cost is £35 and can be booked via the WFA website or by contacting the WFA Office.

The WFA 2019 Spring Conference and AGM is on Saturday 27 April at RAF Cosford, Shifnal, Shropshire TF11 8UP. The event is free to members and the programme for the day is:

09.30am : Tea/coffee

10.15am : Welcome by the President

10.20am : *Escapes and Escapades? British Prisoners of War during the First World War* by Dr Oliver Wilkinson

11.20am : *Shell Shock after the First World War* by Dr Fiona Reid

12.20pm : Buffet lunch (need to pre-book)

13.20pm : AGM

Please contact Steve Oram to book your place and to book the optional £15 buffet lunch - secretary@westernfrontassociation.com.

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