



CHELTENHAM & GLOUCESTER BRANCH of THE WESTERN FRONT ASSOCIATION

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Welcome!

I am delighted to say that we have had two generous offers with regards to my recent plea for volunteers for committee responsibilities. In the first instance, as no-one else stepped forward, Ken Beedon has very graciously offered to extend his tenure as branch merchandise officer. Secondly, Robin Andrews is going to work alongside Hilary as treasurer with the intention of gradually taking over the role. On behalf of us all, I would like to convey our thanks to not only Robin and Ken, but to all our committee volunteers past, present and future whose work ensures the survival of the branch.

If you are a paid up branch member then you should have received your digital copy of *The Sentinel* (please check your spam folder if it hasn't arrived). Hard copies of the publication will be available at tonight's meeting and also at March's meeting.

The WFA's Spring Conference and AGM is on 2 April at the National Army Museum, Royal Hospital Road, London SW3 4HT from 9.30am.

The topics and speakers are: *The British West Indian Regiment: Race and colour on the Western Front* by Dominiek Dendooven; *Absent bodies and broken hearts: Imperial War Graves Commission and the repatriation debate 1915-1939* by Professor Mark Connelly and *The German capture of Fort Douaumont 25 February 1916* by Christina Holstein. The AGM is at 2.45pm. Tea/coffees and a sandwich lunch is included at no cost to members. Please contact admin@westernfrontassociation.com to book your place and lunch.

As part of the *Living History Week* the following events are at the Soldiers of Gloucestershire Museum for the February half term:
22nd & 23rd - *Meet a Red Coat Soldier*
24th - *WWI Day : Meet The Soldiers*
25th - *WWII Day : Meet The Soldiers*

At all these events you can hear about what the soldiers daily lives were like whilst serving for their Regiment and see some of the objects they might have used.

Peter

Future branch events

Tuesday, 14 March

The Artists Rifles in the Great War
Michael Orr

The Ed Shed at 7.30pm

The 28th Battalion of the London Regiment (the Artists Rifles) made a unique contribution to the history of the First World War, as Michael will explain in this talk. The 1st Battalion served with the BEF in France and Flanders but this was the least significant part of the Artists Rifles' wartime history. More importantly over 10,000 men were commissioned into the British Army, Royal Flying Corps or Royal Air Force and even the Royal Navy. But Michael will argue that the most significant contribution of the Artists Rifles has been in how we remember the First World War and the images, words and even sounds that we associate with the war.

Tuesday, 11 April

*The Indian Army during the First World War:
An Ox & Bucks Perspective*
Stephen Barker

The Ed Shed at 7.30pm

During 1914-18, the 1st Oxfordshire & Buckinghamshire Light Infantry (OBLI) fought in Iraq as part of the British Indian Army. Many of the soldiers who died in the campaign are commemorated on war memorials across Oxfordshire. This presentation highlights a project run by the University of Oxford in partnership with the Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum and highlights the part the OBLI played in the campaign and also the role played by Indian soldiers during the war. The talk is fully illustrated, includes a ten-minute film and details of the related exhibition currently touring Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire.

Private William Harkness Evans (513580) 1/14th Battalion, London Regiment (London Scottish)

William Harkness Evans was born at Bradley, near Ashbourne, Derbyshire on 20 April 1897. At the time of the 1911 Census his family lived at The Verlands, Upton Lane, Gloucester and his father was the headmaster at Barnwood School.

Aged ten he headed the scholarship list for Gloucester and was educated at Sir Thomas Rich's School. He left at the age of fifteen, joined the staff of Barclays Bank and was posted to their Walthamstow Branch in east London. He became a member of the Institute of Bankers and passed their qualification examinations.

He attested for military service under 'Lord Derby's Scheme' on 3 December 1918 at the age of 18 years and seven months but was not mobilised until 29 April 1916, when he was aged 19. His posting was to the 1/14th (Territorial Force) Battalion of the London Regiment, better known as the London Scottish and was allocated the number 7669. In 1917 this was changed to 513580, when all serving Territorial Force personnel received a new six digit number.

After summer months in training, he arrived on the Western Front on 7 September 1916 and soon joined the London Scottish in the field. He saw action at Angle Wood, near Guillemont and at Bouleaux and Leuze Wood.

On 31 October 1916 William was wounded in the head (over the right eye) and the right knee at Fauquissart, a village between Laventie and Neuve-Chapelle and was admitted to hospital.

He had recovered from his wounds by April 1917 and saw action in the Battle of Arras, when

his battalion, part of 56th Division, attacked the Hindenburg Line south east of Arras, at Neuville Vitasse.

Later that year the London Scottish was located in the Ypres Salient. According to its war diary, on 16 August the battalion was located near Zillebek and eleven other ranks were killed and ten wounded when a heavy shell fell on a battalion carrying party. William reportedly suffered fourteen wounds to the head, both legs and arms: a piece of shrapnel had penetrated his skull. After a period in hospital at Rouen he was returned to England on 7 October 1917, initially to a hospital in Lancashire and latterly to the Red Cross Hospital in Gloucester.

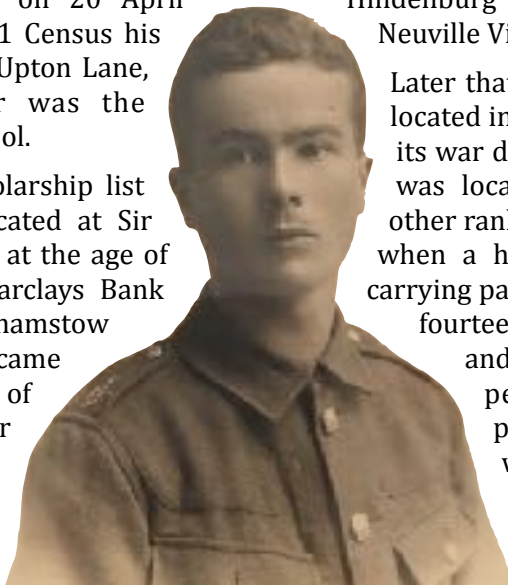
He was discharged from the Army on 20 December 1918, as no longer fit for service. He remained in a poor condition and gradually deteriorated. He collapsed on 10 January 1919 and was rushed to the Red Cross Hospital for an emergency operation, following which he died the following day, aged 21.

His funeral took place at Barnwood Parish Church on 15 January and he was buried in the churchyard, where a standard CWGC headstone marks his grave.

His Serjeant wrote of him: *'He was a true man both in and out of the line - one whom I always selected for the most trying work. His comrades loved him, while I relied upon him. It will be difficult to find his equal.'*

Graham Adams

(from the Gloucestershire War Graves Project biographical archive)



Contact details

Cheltenham & Gloucester Branch President

Professor Peter Simkins MBE FRHistS

Branch Chairman

Peter Gill

Pen Y Bryn, Bull's Hill, Walford,

Ross-on-Wye HR9 5RH

07702 253 638 • chairman@cgwfa.org.uk

Branch Treasurer & Newsletter Editor

Hilary Jennings

4 St Stephen's Road, Cheltenham GL51 3AA

01242 243 927 • newsletter@cgwfa.org.uk

Website

www.cgwfa.org.uk

Facebook

[Cheltenham & Gloucester Branch of the Western Front Association](#)

Twitter

[@CGWFA](#)

The Western Front Association

BM Box 1914,

London WC1N 3XX

0207 118 1914

membership@westernfrontassociation.com

www.westernfrontassociation.com



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