



CHELTENHAM & GLOUCESTER BRANCH of THE WESTERN FRONT ASSOCIATION

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Welcome!

As all branch members know, three times a year we produce a high quality branch publication - The Sentinel. This is always an excellent read and put together through the diligence and expertise of Hilary. However, it is completely reliant on its success to members supplying articles for inclusion. These articles can be of any length (we have even serialised some!), be illustrated or not, and be of any subject linked (however remotely) to the Great War. The Sentinel is truly a creation by members for members, so if you feel that you can contribute anything for its pages then please contact myself or Hilary - we are now running very short of articles for future editions.

After Peter Hodgkinson's excellent talk last month several members asked if he had published anything on the subject. Peter has sent a link to his website: www.peterhodgkinson.co.uk/death-and-burial

One of our members, Len Evans, has been asked to organise a mini convention for the Cotswold group of The Orders and Medals Research Society which will be held at Swindon Village Hall on Saturday, 16 July. It will be an all day event with timings to be confirmed; refreshments will be available. He wondered if this might appeal to members who would like to display either militaria collections or research material and if any member would like to give a short 10 minute talk he is looking for around six volunteers. If you are interested, please contact Len at levans.consulting@gmail.com

We have been given a detailed article by Chris Williams, Head of the College of Arts, Celtic Studies and Social Sciences at University College Cork, about the 38th (Welsh Division) entitled *A Question of 'Legitimate Pride'? The 38th (Welsh) Division at the Battle of Mametz Wood, July 1916*. If you would like a copy please contact Hilary.

Peter

Future branch events

Tuesday, 8 March

London Omnibuses on the Western Front

Roy Larkin

The Ed Shed at 7.30pm

Roy's talk looks at the pre-war relationship between the omnibus companies and the War Office, the mobilisation of the buses and general work of the buses on the Western Front, and at each of the individual bus companies. He tells the most complete story of London's omnibuses during the Great War based on extensive research using the archives of the War Office, the Army Service Corps and the London General Omnibus Company.



Tuesday, 12 April

A Neutral View of the War?

The work of cartoonist Louis Raemaekers

Michael O'Brien

The Ed Shed at 7.30pm

During the First World War, Dutch editorial cartoonist Louis Raemaekers was a fierce critic of the German invasion of Belgium and France. He played a key role in Allied propaganda with his internationally acclaimed war cartoons. In 1917, Raemaekers travelled across the United States in order to persuade Americans to support intervention in the war.



Private Albert Edward Halford (18954) 3rd Battalion, Gloucestershire Regiment

Albert Edward Halford was born at Longford, near Gloucester in 1882.

On 27 September 1902 Albert married Gertrude Mason Watkins at Twigworth and the couple had seven children, three boys and four girls.

He attested for military service on 23 January 1915, when living at Manor Farm Cottages, Longford, Gloucester. He was workings as a carter (or wagon driver) on a farm at the time. He was posted, as a Private (number 18954) to the 3rd (Reserve) Battalion of the Gloucestershire Regiment, for basic training.

On 18 May 1915, he was posted to the 2nd Battalion and embarked from Southampton on that day to join his unit, serving with the BEF, as part of 82nd Brigade, 27 Division. He was almost certainly part of a draft of 135 men, who arrived on 21 May, to replace losses incurred during heavy fighting at Sanctuary Wood, during 8 to 12 May.

On 30 May 1915 the 2nd Glosters took over trenches in the Armentieres sector and it was here that Albert's medical problems began. In July he suffered bronchial problems and from 2 August to 9 September was in No 11 General Hospital at Boulogne, suffering from myalgia. On the 21st he was again admitted to hospital, this time at Wimereux and two days later he was evacuated to England.



During his time in hospital at Boulogne he had been diagnosed with rheumatic fever, brought about by conditions in the trenches and upon arrival in England was sent to a hospital in Cambridge, where he stayed for six months.

He returned to France on 17 March 1916 but his rheumatic condition had worsened and on 9 May of that year he was sent back to England and a hospital in Birmingham.

A medical board convened on 28 September 1916 noted that Albert now had difficulty walking, due to rheumatic limbs and had to use sticks. The damp and cold conditions of the trenches and general hardships of service life were seen as the principal cause. He was discharged as 'quite unfit for further service' and received a Silver War Badge to indicate his discharge due to illness.

Albert Edward Halford died at home on 16 May 1919, aged 37, cause unknown but most probably related to his rheumatic condition. His widow was to die in tragic circumstances in April 1945, after being struck down by a lorry at the junction of Kingsholm Road and Denmark Road in Gloucester.

Private Halford is buried in the churchyard of St Matthew's, Twigworth, where a standard CWGC headstone marks his grave.

Graham Adams

(for the Gloucestershire War Grave Project)

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