



CHELTENHAM & GLOUCESTER BRANCH of THE WESTERN FRONT ASSOCIATION

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Welcome!

In the first instance and most importantly, may I wish you a very Happy New Year. It seems that things come around much quicker these days than they ever did before but it is a welcome constant to be bringing in another year with the branch.

Following my urgent appeal for more involvement in the running of the branch last month, I am thrilled that so many have come forward and offered to take on some of the roles. I would like to thank Joe Devereux, Simon, Louisa and Libby Cook, Ken Beedon, Paul Haigh and Len Evans for all stepping up to the plate and offering to take on new roles. However, this isn't the end of the story, there are still gaps to fill, so please consider if you can spare any time or expertise for the benefit of all. It really is appreciated.

I am also heartened to hear from several of you that, after my recent enquiry, several of you would be interested in some sort of branch

sponsored or integrated trip to the Western Front. However, currently there isn't realistically enough interest shown for us to take any further steps, so if you are potentially interested please let me know - even if you think that it is a 'given' that you would be interested, please tell me directly in one form or another. It would be terrific to get these annual events back up and running

The CWGC has launched *For Evermore: Stories of the Fallen* which represents the next step by the CWGC to honour and remember those from the Commonwealth forces who lost their lives in the world wars. Each story will be linked directly to the CWGC's records. This means you can effortlessly find out where each individual behind the story is commemorated, making it easy to visit their final resting places. If you have a story, you can submit it via the CWGC website: www.cwgc.org.

Peter

Future branch events

Tuesday, 13 February
*British Conscientious Objectors during
the Great War*
Dr Lois Bibbings
The Ed Shed at 7.30pm

This talk is based on over thirty years research, and Lois has published and spoken extensively on the subject. It will be tailored to include material relevant to our branch.



Tuesday, 12 March
TBA
The Ed Shed at 7.30pm

Tuesday, 9 April
The 21st Division on the Somme 1916
Dr Derek Clayton
The Ed Shed at 7.30pm

The story of three ultimately successful assaults during the Battle of the Somme. On 1 July, the Division captured and held its first objectives, resulting in the fall of the village of Fricourt the following day. On 14 July, the 110th Brigade stormed the Bazentin Ridge, capturing the woods and the village. In September, they played their part in the latter stages of the Battle of Flers-Courcelette, culminating in the capture of the village of Gueudecourt.

Private George Frederick Morgan (PO/724(S)) Royal Marine Light Infantry (Portsmouth Division)

George Frederick Morgan was born at Great Malvern on 9 January 1895, one of five children born to George Morgan and his wife Clara. By the time of the 1901 Census the family had moved to Leonard Road, Tredworth, Gloucester.

Upon leaving school George was employed as a grocer's errand boy and then became an engine cleaner, his occupation at the time of his enlistment into the Royal Marines (RM), at Bristol, on 26 October 1914. His initial posting was to the Plymouth Battalion of the Royal Marine Light Infantry (RMLI) before transferring to the Portsmouth Battalion in the following December. After training at the RM Depot at Deal and with the battalion at Blandford Forum, he arrived at Lemnos in the Aegean on 11 March 1915, in anticipation of the Gallipoli landings. The RMLI battalions were now part of the 3rd RM Brigade.

Private Morgan first set foot on the Gallipoli Peninsula on 28 April, landing at Gaba Tepe, just south of the Australian positions at 'Anzac'.

The capture of the village of Krithia and in particular the 700 foot high hill of Achi Baba had been a first day objective of the 24th of April landings at Cape Helles. However, despite concerted attempts by both the British and French, Turkish resistance was such that they were never captured. The 12 July saw one of these attempts. 52 Division, under Lieutenant General Hunter-Weston mounted an attack along



a ravine known as Achi Baba Nullah. It was believed that the Turks had three lines of defences in that sector, when in effect there were only two and this caused confusion and disorientation amongst the attackers and progress stalled. Overnight and during the next day the Turks mounted counter-attacks and Hunter-Weston called up the RM Brigade to renew the attack, in conjunction with the French. Three RMLI battalions were involved but due to a mix up with orders Chatham Battalion never moved and left Nelson and Portsmouth on their own. Despite good communication trenches being available, these battalions moved forward from the original British front line over 400 yards of open ground and once again the faulty intelligence regarding the exact

depth of the Turkish lines led to confusion and the failure of the attack.

Portsmouth Battalion lost every officer but one in the attack and almost 50 other ranks killed. The majority have no known grave. Private Morgan suffered a gun shot wound to the abdomen but it would appear that he was collected from the battlefield and taken to a medical facility, as his date of death is recorded as being a day later, on 14 July and he was buried in Lancashire Landing Cemetery, where his headstone bears the inscription: *Died as he lived ; game to the last.* He is commemorated on the Gloucester War Memorial.

Graham Adams

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."