



CHELtenham & GLOUCESTER BRANCH of THE WESTERN FRONT ASSOCIATION

Number 207

May 2025

Welcome!

Unfortunately, as those of you that attend last month's meeting will know, due to a communication issue between us and Andy Moody, he thought we had 'booked a table for three by the window, for 9.30 pm, not to near the band in the name of *Oberstleutnant Von ...*' rather than a speaking engagement at the Ed Shed that Tuesday! Although this was out with our Andy's control, he has asked that the Branch purchase him a pigeon loft and several pigeons as a means of ensuring good quality communications in the future. We have now sourced one along with our first carrier pigeon - 'Speckled Jim II'. We are, therefore, hopeful that such an issue will not arise again (unless of course someone shoots our rather delicious plump breasted 'Speckled Jim II'...)

As a result of our guest speaking not being able to join us Andy was obliged to play his joker! Which meant for the thirty or so members attending they were forced to listen to me drone on about the genesis of Operational Art on the Western Front and how effective the British were at fighting at the operational level by 1918 ... Sorry!

That great orator Churchill once famously observed that when preparing for a public speaking event if he was required to 'speak for two minutes [it] would

take three weeks, 30 minutes would take a week, and an hour would require no preparation.' I thus started at once and spoke for an hour, although I suspect my presentation lacked the style, panache and gravitas Churchill might have done the subject!

The few moments that I did spend preparing for my short notice task meant I forgot to raise the issue of a summer BBQ. However, as no one at the meeting raised it or has emailed me since I am rapidly reaching the conclusion that members are happy not to have one this year. If I have this wrong, then please do let me know asap!

I am though, delighted to say that I have received a tentative enquire from one of our members regarding taking on the branch membership secretary role.

As a Branch we are again intending to support Armed Forces Day in Gloucester Docks on 28 June with a small stand handing out information about our activities and inviting people to join us. If you are willing to help man the stand, even if only for an hour or so, please do let me know so that we can organise a suitable *roster*.

Simon

Future Branch Events

Tuesday 10 June

Lessons of the Hundred Days Amiens to the Armistice



Simon reviews the lessons learned during the Last Hundred Days Campaign during the Advance from the Battle of Amiens on 8th August 1918, to the taking of the Hindenburg Line & then on to the Armistice on 11th November 1918

Dr Simon Peaple
7.30pm Ed Shed

Tuesday 8 July

There Were No Neutrals In The Trenches



In this talk Michael will give an account of those American citizens who died fighting in the British Army during the Somme campaign from July to November 1916.

Michael O'Brien
7.30pm Ed Shed

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

240694 Private Henry Thomas Collorick
1/5th Battalion, Gloucestershire Regiment

When the Great War broke out Henry (Harry) Thomas Collorick was a 'Citizen newsboy', selling copies of the newspaper in the Stroud Road area of Gloucester. He was born in Gloucester in 1888 and was one of seven children born to Frederick and Emily Collorick, of whom only three (all boys) had survived by the time of the 1911 Census. The family home was at 33 High Street, in the Tredworth area of Gloucester.



Harry volunteered for the Army very early in the war and joined the Territorial 1/5 Battalion of the Gloucestershire Regiment, where he was given the number 2665. In 1917 all Territorials were given new, six digit, numbers and Harry's became 240694.

He went to the Western Front with the battalion on 29 March 1915 and only came home twice on leave for the next two years. During this time, he was wounded twice, the first occasion being on 28 September 1915 and about a year later his mother was informed that he was in hospital in France, after suffering a shrapnel wound to his leg.

On 5 April 1917, 145 Brigade, 48 Division, of which the 1/5 Glosters were part, mounted an attack on the villages of Lempire, Ronssoy and Basse Boulogne, situated approximately three km southeast of Epehy. The Glosters were tasked with the capture of the latter, plus La Paurrelle and Maye Copse. The attack went in at 4.55am and five minutes later the enemy opened a heavy barrage, which fortunately fell well beyond the attacking troops. By 6am the Glosters had secured their objectives and taken up positions on the north east and east sides of Lempire. Their new positions were heavily shelled by the enemy and the Glosters lost 15 Other Ranks killed and 40 wounded plus one officer wounded. Private Harry Collorick was one of those killed. The date of 5 April 1917 was officially the day the 1917 German Retreat to the Hindenburg Line ended.

Only four days before, back home in Gloucester his father had died and his mother now received a letter from the Battalion Chaplain, informing her that her son had been killed by a shell after a successful attack on a village held by the Germans and that he had been buried where he fell. The *Gloucester Journal* report of his death stated that he was a *cheery, happy-go-lucky lad, a useful footballer and had played for the Battalion Rugby Team.*

Private Harry Collorick now lies in Unicorn Cemetery, near Vendhuile, adjacent to the Epehy to Lempire road. It is highly likely that he was originally buried in La Paurrelle British Cemetery, which was established by the 1/5 Glosters in the Spring of 1917 and closed post war, with its burials moved to Unicorn Cemetery. He is commemorated on the Gloucester War Memorial.

Graham Adams



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