



## CHELtenham & GLOUCESTER BRANCH of THE WESTERN FRONT ASSOCIATION

Number 210

August 2025

### Welcome!

On Saturday 12 July, in searing heat, three members from the Branch attended a historic shooting day organised by WFA members Bob Brunsdon & Dave Gargett at Greensleeves Shooting Club. Along with members of the Historic Wireless Group we examined, and then shot, a variety of historic firearms from a Civil War matchlock and a Napoleonic Brown Bess, to British and German rifles from the two world wars and up to the present day.



Examining the of historic firearms before firing.

The most accurate shots won the opportunity to shoot a 'mad minute' - the rapid-fire section of the FWW recruits' qualification course - with a vintage Lee-Enfield.

As a result of the monies raised on the day Greensleeves Shooting Club has very generously donated of £235 to our Branch.

I would also like to take this opportunity to highlight an event being held by one of our fellow local groups – the Orders and Medals Research Society. On Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> September at Swindon Village Hall, Cheltenham they are holding a meeting at which Live Montellier from the Joint Medal Office at Imjin Barracks will be briefing them about the design and issue of new medals, something that has happened a lot in the last few years. He will also be covering the role of the DNA Investigation Team – The War Detectives of TV fame. If you are interested in attending, please could you let the organiser Len Evans know at [levans.consulting@gmail.com](mailto:levans.consulting@gmail.com)

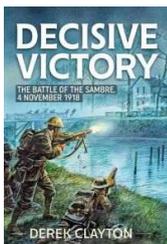
*Simon*

### Future Branch Events

**Tuesday 9 September**

**The Battle of the Sambre 4 November 1918**

**Dr Derek Clayton**



This talk is based on Dr Clayton's PhD Thesis (University of Birmingham 2015) covering how the Third and Fourth Armies deliver the final knockout blow to the German Army as they assault the Forest of Mormal and force the crossing of the Sambre.

**7.30pm Ed Shed**

**Tuesday 14 October**

**The Palestine Campaign**

**Dr John Peaty**



Following three battles to break into Palestine at Gaza, the capture of Jerusalem and a spectacular victory at Megiddo (Armageddon) which finally broke the enemy forces, the Holy Land

was freed from Turkish rule.

**7.30pm Ed Shed**

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

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## SECOND LIEUTENANT CECIL CHARLES LEWIS 6th TRAINING SQUADRON, AUSTRALIAN FLYING CORPS

Cecil Charles Lewis was born in Mansfield, Victoria in 1896, the only child of Joseph and Elizabeth Lewis of Moyhu, Victoria. He worked as a motor driver before enlistment into the Australian Army, at Melbourne, on 19 April 1916. His initial posting was as a Private with 15th Reinforcements, 22nd Battalion and on 25 September 1916 he embarked from Melbourne, arriving in Plymouth on 11 November 1916.



Initially he was based in Wiltshire, with training battalions at Fovant Camp and Larkhill. On 1 June 1917 he was posted to France with the Wireless Section and on 18 July 1917 was attached to 'Y' Army Corps Signals, prior to joining 11th ANZAC Corps Wireless Department on 28 July 1917 and shortly after 3rd (Australian) Division Signals Company. The Australian Flying Corps was looking for recruits and he transferred on 24 November 1917, with a view to becoming a pilot.

On 7 December 1917 he commenced training at No 2 School of Military Aeronautics, Oxford and on 26 March 1918 joined 7th Training Squadron at Leighterton Aerodrome. He graduated as a pilot and was promoted Second Lieutenant on 16 June 1918: on 5 July he was posted to 6th Training Squadron at nearby Minchinhampton Aerodrome (now Aston Down airfield).

On 14 August 1918, at about 10 am, he took off from Minchinhampton in a Sopwith Pup Scout, without the permission of the unit Flight Commander. He had over 13 hours solo flying experience in the Pup and was no doubt keen to hone his flying skills. At about 10.15 am, he practiced nose dives over the hangars at Leighterton. His third dive was from about 800 feet and the Court of Inquiry concluded that he misjudged the moment to pull out of the dive, as the aircraft struck the ground whilst attempting to flatten out. He was still alive when found in the wreckage but suffering from a fractured skull and he died on his way to Tetbury Cottage Hospital. He was 22 years of age.



He was buried in Leighterton Church Cemetery on 17 August 1918, with military honours.

*(Research by Graham Adams, for the Branch's Gloucestershire War Graves Project)*

### Cheltenham & Gloucester Branch Contact Details

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