



CHELTENHAM & GLOUCESTER BRANCH of THE WESTERN FRONT ASSOCIATION

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Welcome!

Our meeting tonight is inevitably tinged with sadness. We should of course have been welcoming Essex Branch Chairman Bill Fulton to talk to us, but with his sudden passing last month it is a great regret that we won't ever be able to enjoy his talk. Bill was a true friend and supporter to the branch and an excellent speaker who always mixed knowledge with a touch of humour. He shall sorely be missed and our deepest sympathies and condolences have been sent to Bill's family.

It is very poignant, but fitting, that we thank Graham Adams for moving his talk forward from the autumn to tonight in place of Bill's. Bill was a great friend of Graham's and indeed it was Graham who I believe introduced Bill to the Branch at our inception.

In light of this change and indeed other circumstances out of our control we have had to make alterations to several of the talks

advertised in this year's calendar. Please therefore keep a careful eye on our website - www.cgwfa.org.uk - and also our newsletters and emails.

The National Archives has announced that they will be extending their Thursday opening hours until 21:00 during May and June. Most of their public spaces will be open until that time, including their reading rooms, Keeper's Gallery exhibition, shop and library. Their visitors' car park will also be open. Please visit their website for further details - www.nationalarchives.gov.uk

The Duxford Air Show is on 26 and 27 May, and 'Early Bird' discounted tickets are still available until 13 May. Details can be found on their website, accessed via the Imperial War Museum home page - www.iwm.org.uk. There is also a full flying list and details of the events happening on the showground that weekend.

Peter

Future events

Tuesday, 12 June

*War is the only school of the surgeon -
medical developments during the Great War*
Pete Starling

National Star College at 7.30pm

The First World War was a great learning curve for medical care of the wounded soldier.

Pete's talk will examine the various improvements that took place as the war progressed.



On the wards

Tuesday, 10 July

The Destruction of the 13th Gloucesters, 1918
Sam Eedle

National Star College at 7.30pm

The 13th Gloucesters were a Pioneer battalion that had been serving on the Western Front since early 1916. On 21 March 1918 they were preparing fortifications behind the lines near Templeux-la-Fosse when the long-expected German 'Kaiserschlacht' attack broke. They were right in its path. Over the course of ten days, as the British Fifth Army pulled back, the Battalion dug scratch fortifications, fought desperate rearguard actions and withdrew over thirty miles, suffering over 300 killed, wounded and missing.

After the remnants, stragglers and lightly wounded were collected together for 'Rest', they were sent as part of a 'Composite' battalion to Ypres. On 26 April, they were cut off by an early morning German attack in the mist. Just 67 men returned to Battalion HQ. Sam tells their story.

Private Albert Charles Brading (8183) 1st Battalion, Gloucestershire Regiment

Albert was born in Gloucester in 1887, the third of ten children, to George Henry and Ann Brading. By 1901 the family had moved to Hinton near Sharpness. When he was older Albert worked as a farm labourer on Old Hurst Farm and was also a reservist with the Gloucestershire Regiment. By the time of the 1911 census he was serving with the Army in Malta. The Bradings were a military family. Albert's father, George, had served as a bombardier in the Royal Artillery and three of his brothers also served in the First World War, two of whom survived.

On 6 August 1913 Albert married Prudence Ellen Mary Taylor in Cirencester.

Albert was killed in action in one of the first large engagements of the war, the First Battle of the Aisne. The battle took place between 13 and 28 September and the British casualties were 13,541 killed or wounded.

Albert died on 16 September 1914, aged 27. He has no known grave but he is commemorated on the La Ferte-Sous-Jouarre Memorial which bears the inscription: *To the glory of God and the lasting memory of 3,888 British officers and men whose graves are not known who landed in France in the month of August 1914 and between then and October fought at Mons and Le Cateau and on the Marne and the Aisne.*

Albert, together with his brother Jacob who was killed in action on 9 May 1915, is also commemorated on the Berkeley Roll of Honour and on the Slimbridge War Memorial.



Albert is on the left, seen here with his brother Henry Jacob

Prudence received news of Albert's death on her 21st birthday; sadly she lost the child she was carrying at the time.

Taken from Slimbridge Remembers

Towards Victory

The WFA York Conference *Towards Victory* will take place on 7 July at Manor Academy, Millfield Lane, Nether Poppleton, York YO26 6AP. Doors open at 9am and the event starts at 9.45am.

The speakers are Taff Gillingham - *Tommies in 1918*; Dr Peter Hodgkinson - *The Battle of the Selle 17/18 October 1918*; Dr Tim Gale - *From the*

Battle of Montdidier to the Battle of Guise - The French Army in the 100 Days Campaign 1918 and Professor David Stevenson - *Politics and Strategy in the Making of the November 1918 Armistice.*

The cost is £30 which includes a buffet lunch plus tea/coffee, and full booking details can be found on the WFA website.

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