

	CHELTENHAM & GLOUCESTER BRANCH of THE WESTERN FRONT ASSOCIATION	
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Welcome!

Firstly, may I welcome everyone back and wish you all a very Happy New Year. I hope you all had a thoroughly enjoyable Christmas and that your bookcases are groaning under the weight of all the additional military history books that you received. However, that should not stop you from rooting through the excellent selection of second-hand books we have on offer at our meetings. Remember you can never have enough First World War military history books!

I would like to thank everyone who attended our AGM and Members Night. I believe the format worked really well and I am extremely grateful to the committee you presented their sections so clearly and to all the members who took an active part in the meeting. We will publish the minutes of the meeting along with this newsletter on our website in the next few days.

The AGM was followed by an excellent brief from Dave covering our own Branch website, which can be accessed using the link or QR code in the letter head above, and our social media output on Facebook by typing in:

Cheltenham & Gloucester Branch of the Western Front Association

We are also on X which can be found by entering:

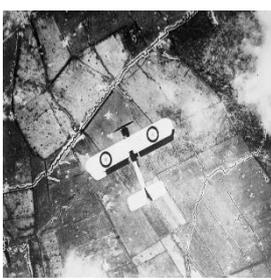
@CGWFA

For those who are comfortable on social media please can I encourage you to follow and like Dave's posts. The more 'likes' we have the greater our Branch profile and reach.

Dave gave us a tour around the WFA's new website. I must say it is much easier to navigate, and I personally have been using its now fully searchable back catalogue of *Stand To!* to support my own research. If you are not a member of the WFA you may wish to consider joining - the new website is an excellent resource, combining as it does Trenchmapper, Pension Records, over 500 individual unit ORBATs as well as the digitized *Stand To!* and many other magazines and historic periodicals as just some of the membership benefits.

Finally, I would also like to thank our in-house presenters for their excellent 10-minute lecturettes

Simon

<p style="text-align: center;">Tuesday 10 February Smith Dorian and the Mons Campaign David Keable-Elliott</p> <p>Based on a fresh operational analysis, with reference to war diaries from GHQ to battalion level, Horace Smith Dorrien's coolness and rapidity of thought, under the competent direction of Sir John French, is revealed as the key to the remarkable survival of II Corps at both Mons and Le Cateau</p> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div> <p style="text-align: center;">7.30pm Ed Shed</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Tuesday 10 March The Development of Aeroplanes & their initial uses in 1914 and early 1915 Robin Goldsmith</p> <p>Robin charts the transition from early flying machine, through the formation of the Royal Flying Corps to the emerging roles of military aviation in the first year of the Great War.</p> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div> <p style="text-align: center;">7.30pm Ed Shed</p>
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"When you go home, tell them of us and say, for your tomorrow, we gave our today"

Captain Douglas Ridley Clunes Gabell - 13th Training Squadron, Royal Air Force

Douglas Ridley Clunes Gabell was born on 28 November 1897 in Charlton Kings, near Cheltenham, the son of Emma Gabell (née Jones) and the Rev Arthur Charles Gabell, Rector of Swindon Village 1901-1914 and acting vicar-in-charge at St John's Church, Cheltenham.

He was educated at Cheltenham College from September 1912 until July 1915, prior to admission to the Royal Military College, Sandhurst, and was commissioned into the Gloucestershire Regiment in July 1916.



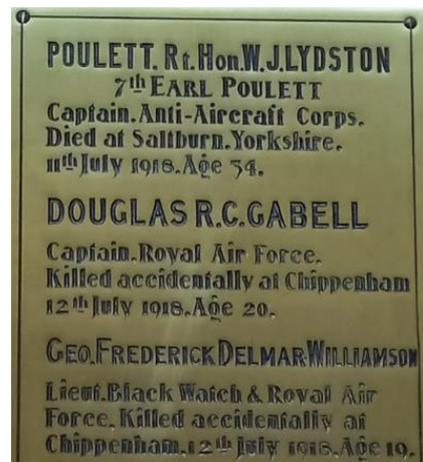
On 1 September 1916 he transferred to the Royal Flying Corps and after only three weeks' training, he proceeded as a pilot to the Western Front, where he saw considerable service. He was twice brought down. On 1 March 1917, whilst with 4th Squadron, flying a BE2e, he and his observer engaged in combat with six enemy aircraft near Achiet le Petit.

His aircraft was shot down, and he was seriously wounded and repatriated to the UK. Following recovery, he was promoted Captain in January 1918 and, although he repeatedly applied to return to the front, his services were required at home as an instructor at Yatesbury, Wiltshire, with 13th Training Squadron, now Royal Air Force. He was Wing Examining Officer, a senior examiner, instructing in advanced flying – testing pupils and instructors, and raising the standard of flying and instruction for instructors.

On 12 July 1918, he was co-piloting an RE8 aircraft on a test flight over Chippenham, Wiltshire; the pilot was Lieutenant George Frederick Delmar-Williamson. The machine collapsed in mid-air and crashed to the ground and both occupants were killed.

Captain Gabell was buried on 16 July 1918 in the churchyard of St Lawrence, Swindon Village, where a private headstone marks his grave. He is commemorated in the Memorial Chapel at the Royal Military College, Sandhurst and on Cheltenham and Swindon Village War Memorials as well as the Cheltenham College memorial. His co-aviator, Lieutenant Delmar-Williamson is buried in the churchyard of St. Peter's, Leckhampton.

At the time of his death, his father's address was given as Battledown Gates, Cheltenham. According to his Medal Rolls Index Card, his address was changed from Ashfield, Crickhowell, Breconshire to 14 The Lees, Malvern, Worcestershire, on 22 November 1921. As this was some time after his death, this may have been a forwarding address for his medals, his father subsequently died on 10 July 1957.



*(Research by Baden Russell, for the Branch's Gloucestershire War Graves Project,
Photos provided of Cheltenham College Archives)*

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