

## PRIVATE CHARLES HENRY BAILEY

16165, 10th (Service) Battalion, Gloucestershire Regiment

Died aged 19 on 19 December 1915

Buried with honour in *Dud Corner Cemetery, Loos*; II C 11

Commemorated in Tewkesbury at the Cross, in the Abbey and in the Methodist Church



*Dud Corner Cemetery, Loos, France*



*1914-15 Star Medal*



*Gloucestershire Regiment*

**CHARLES HENRY BAILEY** (initially Henry Charles but names were later reversed) was born in Tewkesbury in 1896 to Albert Bailey and Alice (formerly Staight). Albert was a bricklayer from Blockley and Alice came from Tirley. In 1891 they were living in Old Chapel Yard, Church Street, with two children but by 1901 the family, now including Charles, had moved to 10 Union Place, Chance Street, where they lived until at least 1915. Albert and Alice had a total of 12 children, of whom seven were alive in 1911. At that time, Charles was still at the Council Schools, after which he was employed by Frisby, the shoe shop at the Cross. Subsequently, he left Tewkesbury to work on the railway at Frocester.

Charles volunteered in December 1914, enlisting in the Gloucestershire Regiment. Initially he joined the 3rd (Reserve) Battalion whose job was to train soldiers for front-line service with the regular battalions in wartime. Charles was not commemorated as an Abbey Volunteer despite the fact that he enlisted in Tewkesbury. At some stage, presumably after completing his training, he was transferred to the 10th Battalion, formed at Bristol in September 1914 as part of Kitchener's New Army. Charles landed with the battalion in France on 9 August 1915 when it was part of the 1st Division, replacing a regular Guards battalion. The 10th Battalion was soon involved in the *Battle of Loos* (25 September-18 October 1915), the largest British offensive mounted in 1915, undertaken in support of major French offensives. The *Register* reported: *'the battle took place ... in an area utterly unsuited to an attack ... before stocks of*

*ammunition and heavy artillery were sufficient; the battle was noteworthy for the first use of poison gas by the British Army. Despite heavy casualties, there was considerable success on the first day ... near Loos but the opportunities could not be exploited, resulting in a costly stalemate.'* The Battalion's casualties were 459 in the initial assault on 25 September and more than 150 during a further attack in October.

The Battalion was relieved on 14 October, spending the next month in rest and recuperation. On 14 November 1915 the Battalion returned to the Loos area and, as was the norm during quiet periods, moved regularly between the front-line and reserve positions, resting, training, re-equipping and even cleaning streets. During 14-26 December 1915 the Battalion was in the front line trenches and the War Diary noted that: *'Battalion in Loos sector and employed as a digging or pioneer battalion. Five casualties'*.

**Private Charles Henry Bailey** was undoubtedly one of the casualties mentioned in the Diary as he was killed by a shell-burst on 19 December 1915. **Private Albert William Woolcott** of Fletcher's Alley tried to console Charles's grieving parents by writing a letter: *'poor Charles, he did not suffer, he was killed outright. Your son was respected by all ... before the war broke out we were great chums ... he died a hero on the battle field, doing his duty nobly for King and Country.'* Albert survived the war, after being wounded on the Somme in 1916.

Private Charles Henry Bailey's body was recovered and he was buried in *Dud Corner Cemetery* at Loos-en-Gohelle. He was awarded the '1914-15 Star' medal.