

PRIVATE GEORGE HAWKINS BROTHERIDGE

51665, 1st/5th Gloucestershire Regiment

Died aged 20 on 23 October 1918

Buried with honour in the *Highland Cemetery, Le Cateau, France*; VIII A 5

Commemorated in Tewkesbury only on the Grammar School Memorial at the Town Hall



Highland Cemetery, Le Cateau



Gloucestershire Regiment

GEORGE HAWKINS BROTHERIDGE was born in 1898 in Ashleworth, Gloucestershire, to Thomas Brotheridge and Clara Ann (formerly Jones). Thomas was a farmer, originally from Tirley, and Clara was born in Tuffley. In 1901 George was living at Colways Farm, Ashleworth, with his parents, widowed grandmother Ann Jones and a younger brother, Frederick John. In 1911 he was still living in the same household with the addition of another brother and two sisters. The two older boys at least were educated at Tewkesbury Grammar School, as was their father (who died in 1919). *De Ruvigny's Roll of Honour* (1914-1924) notes that part of George's education was also undertaken at King's School, Gloucester, and that he was a Dairy and Farming student who subsequently assisted his father on the farm.

De Ruvigny's indicates that George joined the Gloucestershire Regiment on 24 May 1918. According to the casualty records, he enlisted in Bristol and was posted to the 1st/5th Battalion, one of the pre-war Territorial Force units. On 15 May 1915, his battalion was included in the re-named 145th Infantry Brigade, 48th (South Midland) Division. The Division was transferred to Italy on 24 November 1917 after two and a half years on the Western Front. On 11 September 1918 the battalion left the 48th Division and returned to France where it was attached to the 75th Infantry Brigade in the 25th Division. It does not seem as if George joined the battalion in Italy: *De Ruvigny's* refers to him having served in France and Flanders from September.

The 25th Division, including the 1st/5th Gloucesters, was part of the Fourth Army which

was in the forefront of the campaign known as '*The Last Hundred Days*' during which the Allies inflicted a series of crushing defeats on the German Army, culminating in the Armistice. In October the Fourth Army was involved in the *Battle of the Selle* (17-25 October 1918), south of Le Cateau, when the British ejected the Germans from a new defensive line they had established along the River Selle after being forced out of the Hindenburg Line.

De Ruvigny's comments that George died at a Dressing Station on 24 October 1918 of wounds received in action a few hours previously, without doubt during the *Battle of the Selle*. *De Ruvigny's* also reports that his Commanding Officer wrote: '*He was very brave and cheerful, and I always found him willing and cheerful under all circumstances*' and his Sergeant Major reported that '*he was a most willing and good soldier, and his loss is deeply regretted by all who knew him*'.

Private George Hawkins Brotheridge is buried in the *Highland Cemetery*, Le Cateau, France. He is not recorded as a Tewkesbury volunteer although both he and his younger brother, **2nd Lt. Frederick John Brotheridge** [†] of the Royal Air Force, who was killed on 19 May 1918, are commemorated on the *Tewkesbury Grammar School Memorial*, currently displayed at the Town Hall.

Neither brother is included on the Ashleworth War Memorial but they are commemorated on the Roll of Honour at King's School, Gloucester, and honoured during the annual Remembrance Day ceremony at the school as one of '*The King's Fallen WWI*'.