

SERGEANT ALBERT COOPEY, M.M.

240080, 1st/5th Battalion, Gloucestershire Regiment

Died aged 24 on 15 June 1918

Buried with honour in *Boscon British Cemetery, Asiago, Italy*; 2 D 9

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



Boscon British Cemetery



Sgt. A Coopey, M.M. [Graphic]



Gloucestershire Regiment

ALBERT COOPEY was born in Tewkesbury in 1893, the son of Moses Coopey and Eliza (formerly Morris) who were married in 1887. Moses was a Corn Porter at Rice's Mill on the Quay, which is where the family of six lived. Albert was a pupil at the Holy Trinity schools and in 1911 was a Draper Assistant for Henry Norman, Draper, of Victoria House, 133-134 High Street, trading as Lemuel Jones. He then worked for N. B. Stephens back in the corn trade until he left for a position at Badgeworth Manor. Albert had also been a teacher in the Sunday School and Secretary of the Temperance Band of Hope, hence his Memorial in the Church.

Albert joined the 5th Battalion, Gloucestershire Regiment, sometime in late 1911 or early 1912 judging by his initial service number. The battalion was formed originally in April 1908 as part of the Territorial Force whose pre-war role was confined to home defence; such units were not intended to be used for overseas service. On the outbreak of war, however, the Territorial Force was mobilised and territorial soldiers were asked to volunteer for overseas service. Those that did so, like Albert Coopey, were allocated to a newly formed first-line battalion (1st/5th) which went to France the following year, landing at Boulogne on 29 March 1915; Albert qualified, therefore, for the '1914-15 Star' medal. The battalion became part of the renamed 145th Infantry Brigade, 48th (South Midland) Division.

Albert served on the Western Front for two and a half years. In May 1915 he wrote home about 'scent Bombs for which they were supplied with goggles and pads to breathe through'; he was presumably speaking of gas.

Rising through the ranks, he was a Corporal in September 1916 when he reported to the *Tewkesbury Register* that he had been 'wounded in his right foot, ... but nothing serious'. He received the wound when his battalion captured a German trench: 'It was fine how our chaps did it ... scrapping with the Boche ... wounded in the back of the neck ... it was very exciting', but he survived. Albert won the **Military Medal** for '**fine leading and gallantry**' during an attack on Tombois Farm during the 'wild night' of 16-17 April 1917, as his battalion was following up the German withdrawal from the Somme battlefields to the Hindenburg Line.

The 48th Division was transferred to Italy on 24 November 1917. Italy had joined the war on the Allied side in May 1915 but by 1918 the Italian Army was on the defensive, requiring support from British and French forces. In March 1918 the 48th Division helped relieve Italian troops on the front line. The front was comparatively quiet until the Austrians attacked in force in the *Battle of Asiago* (15-16 June 1918). The Allied line was penetrated to a depth of about 1,000 metres on 15 June and it was during this attack that Albert Coopey was killed. The lost ground was re-taken the next day and the line re-established.

Sergeant Albert Coopey's obituary recorded that '*His body was found the next day*' and he was buried in **Boscon British Cemetery**, Asiago, Italy – one of 17 men from the battalion killed on the same day and buried in the cemetery.

Another Tewkesbury man, **Private Frank Noel Green** [†], was killed the following day and is also buried in the cemetery.