

LANCE CORPORAL FRANK DICKENSON

7364, 1st Battalion, Gloucestershire Regiment

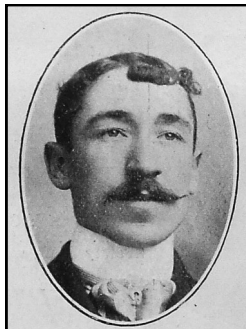
Died aged 34 on 20 August 1916

Remembered with honour on *Thiepval Memorial*; Pier and Face 5A and 5B

Commemorated in Tewkesbury at the Cross and in the Abbey



*Thiepval Memorial,
France*



*L/Cpl. F. Dickenson
[Graphic]*



*Gloucestershire
Regiment*

FRANK DICKENSON was born in Tewkesbury in 1882 to James Dickenson and Mary Ann (formerly Wise). James was a stableman/groom then cab-driver, born near Tetbury, whilst Mary Ann came from Kinnersley, Worcestershire. They married in Upton-on-Severn in 1877 before moving three years later to Tewkesbury; they had a total of ten living children in 1911. In 1881 they were living in Tolsey Lane but by 1891 had moved to 33 High Street. Shortly afterwards they moved again, to number 78, when it may have been a shop as Mary Ann was fined for selling margarine as butter. Frank attended the Abbey Day School and Wesleyan Sunday School and then worked as a groom for B. Cook & Son of Chambers Court, Longdon. In 1901 he was boarding independently at the White Bear. Before that, he had fallen foul of the law in 1898 when, along with three others, Frank, then aged 16, was fined 2/6d. (13p) for playing football in Sun Street (on the previous site of the Post Office in the High Street).

Frank Dickenson had enlisted in the Gloucestershire Regiment as a regular soldier with the 1st Battalion in 1902. He married Eliza Emma Voyce in Chelmsford, Essex, in 1907. In 1911, having completed his time with the Colours, Frank was working as a domestic coachman and living at 14 Alfred Road, Brentwood, Essex, with Eliza and their two young daughters. Two sons followed, both born in Billericay: Frank W. and Frederick E. C..

As a Reservist, Frank was recalled to the 1st Battalion in August 1914. His medal records show that he was part of the British Expeditionary Force (BEF), an 'Old Contemptible', and

landed in France on 13 August 1914. The battalion was part of the 1st Division which was involved in most of the major actions in 1914 and 1915, including the battles of *Mons*, the *Marne*, the *Aisne*, *First Ypres* and *Loos*. Frank was wounded in 1914 in the finger and he was also suffering from 'influenza, rheumatism and frostbite'. He was awarded the '1914 (*Mons*) *Star and Clasp*' in recognition of service under fire. The battalion remained near Loos until June 1916 then moved south to take part in the *Battles of the Somme*. Initially the battalion was in reserve but moved into the front line at Contalmaison in July. As part of the *Battle of Bazentin Ridge*, the battalion carried out successful attacks to capture German trench systems. The first half of August was spent mainly in reserve but, on 20 August, during the *Battle of Pozières*, the War Diary noted: 'Front line held by A Company with 2 Lewis Guns and 10 men in advanced post ... A Company's advanced position was attacked and driven back 30 yards where a position in shell holes was taken up'. The Diary reported 13 men killed and 39 wounded.

L/Cpl. Frank Dickenson was killed in action on 20 August 1916, no doubt in the German attack on that day. His body was never recovered and he is commemorated on the *Thiepval Memorial to the Missing*.

Frank's widow, Mary Ann, and their three (later to be four) children remained in Essex; she was awarded a War Gratuity of £11.10s.0d. [£11.50p] in 1919. Frank's brother, **Oscar Dickenson**, served in the 2nd London Regiment (Royal Fusiliers) but survived the war despite being wounded and taken prisoner in May 1917.