

TROOPER WILLIAM GILLEECE DUTTON

3549, 2nd Life Guards

Died aged 26 on 29 September 1915

Remembered with honour on *Loos Memorial*; Panel 1

Commemorated in Tewkesbury on the Grammar School Memorial



*Loos Memorial,
France*



*Trooper W.G. Dutton (right) with
his two brothers [John Ryder]*



*2nd Life
Guards*

WILLIAM GILLEECE DUTTON was born in Forthampton in 1889 to Henry and Mary Dutton. Henry was also born in Forthampton whilst Mary came from King's County (now Offaly), Ireland; Mary's maiden name is unknown but may well have been Gilleece as that has Irish roots. Henry and Mary had five children all of whom were still alive in 1911. Henry was a baker and flour dealer and the family was living at Brewer's Cottage, Forthampton, in 1891 and 1901. In 1911 William was assisting him in the business as well as being Scoutmaster of Forthampton Troop. William was educated at Tewkesbury Grammar School. In 1922 Henry and Mary retired to Woodend Lodge, Queenhill.

In his military records William's middle name is spelt incorrectly as 'Gilluce'. He enlisted in Tewkesbury on 26 November 1914 as a Trooper in the the 2nd Life Guards, the Household Cavalry. His service record includes a character reference from the Vicar of Forthampton: *'I have every reason to consider him a highly respectable and honourable man. His character is as free from stain as it is full of good qualities'*.

The 2nd Life Guards were part of the 7th Cavalry Brigade in the 3rd Cavalry Division. The main body landed at Zeebrugge on 8 October 1914. The regiment was soon engaged in much of the fighting. Other than in the first two weeks, when it was used in the traditional cavalry role for mobile reconnaissance, the regiment fought most of the war as a dismounted force.

William actually joined his regiment in France on 12 August 1915, at which point he was assigned to the Cyclists Company. Apart from one of its three squadrons, the regiment was not involved in the *Battle of Loos* (25 September-18 October 1915), the largest British offensive mounted in 1915. The Regimental War Diary notes that September was spent mainly in 'training' and 'digging trenches', there is no reference to fighting nor to casualties. However, the Diary refers to the detachment of B Squadron and its deployment to 1st Army at Loos. This suggests that William's Cyclist Company was involved in the Division's relief of battered infantry units, starting on 26 September. This would explain why William was at Loos.

Trooper William Gilleece Dutton was killed in action on 29 September 1915, probably as a result of artillery fire as he was *'guarding the bicycles'* at the time. William's body was never recovered and he is commemorated on the *Loos Memorial*. He was awarded the *'1914-15 Star'* medal.

Not a citizen of Tewkesbury, William is only commemorated on the Tewkesbury Grammar School Memorial. However, he is also remembered on the Memorial at Forthampton. William's brothers also volunteered in 1914: Alfred Gilleece served firstly in the Army Service Corps and Gilbert Gilleece joined the same unit as William. Both survived the war, although William's eldest brother, Henry Gilleece, a talented organist who emigrated to New Zealand, died after falling ill in 1919.