

PRIVATE CHARLES EDWARD GARRETT*

31958, 9th Battalion, Gloucestershire Regiment

Died aged 33 on 25 April 1917

Buried with honour at **Karasouli Military Cemetery, Greece**; B 309

Commemorated in Tewkesbury at the Cross, in the Abbey and
on the General Post Office Memorial now in Northway



Karasouli Military Cemetery



1914-15 Star Medal



Gloucestershire Regiment

CHARLES EDWARD GARRETT (GARRATT) was not a native of Tewkesbury but was born in 1883 in Bloomsbury, London, to Charles Garratt from London and Mary Ann (formerly Collinson) from Suffolk. *Charles's surname on the CWGC website is shown incorrectly; his birth was registered as 'Garratt' and official sources such as his medal records use that spelling. In 1901 the family was living in St. Pancras, London, and Charles senior was working as a messenger for a diamond merchant.

However, by 1911 Charles had moved to Tewkesbury, boarding with the Woodyatt family at 88 Church Street and working as a self-employed photographer. He must have worked for the General Post Office at some stage as he is commemorated on its memorial, although he is best known in the town as a photographer. Indeed his claim to fame, according to Dr. James Freeman, biographer of rival photographer Halsey Freeman, is taking the iconic photograph of the burning down of Walker's Factory in Oldbury Road in 1908. The 1914 Directory lists him as '*photographer, Station Street*' and he is described as such in his brief death notice on 12 May 1917. Charles married Laura, daughter of E. T. Taylor, the monumental mason of Church Street, in September 1915.

Judging by his army service number, Charles was conscripted in 1916. He enlisted in Tewkesbury in the Gloucestershire Regiment and was assigned to the 'Kitchener' 9th Battalion, under the command of the 26th Division. The battalion

had landed in France on 21 September 1915 and spent just two months on the Western Front without seeing any action before being transferred to Salonika in Greece in November 1915, initially to provide support for the Serbs against German, Austro-Hungarian and Bulgarian forces. In 1916 the theatre was relatively quiet with health and living conditions the main enemy; large numbers of men succumbed to malaria, dysentery and other endemic diseases. However, the battalion was involved in the *Battle of Horseshoe Hill* (10-18 August) when the Allies unsuccessfully tried to capture Bulgarian positions near Lake Doiran. After that, there was little activity except around the lake where '*the line was adjusted several times by each side*'.

In Spring the following year the Allied forces made a further unsuccessful attempt, in the shape of the *First Battle of Doiran* (24-25 April), to defeat the Bulgarian army and achieve a breakthrough in the Balkans.

Private Charles Edward Garrett (Garratt) was killed in action on 25 April 1917 [aged 33] during these operations. Charles's body was recovered and he was buried initially in Caussica Military Cemetery, although the graves were exhumed in November 1920 and transferred to **Karasouli Military Cemetery** in Greece. Charles was awarded the '*1914-15 Star*' medal.

In 1919 his widow, Laura Garratt, was living at 84 High Street, possibly as a lodger with the Wilkins family.