

PRIVATE FREDERICK GREEN

26626, 13th Service Battalion (Forest of Dean Pioneers), Gloucestershire Regiment
Died aged 27 on 22 March 1918

Buried with honour at *Peronne Communal Cemetery Extension, France*; III H 35
Commemorated in Tewkesbury as a Volunteer but not at the Cross nor in the Abbey



Peronne Communal Cemetery Extension



Gloucestershire Regiment

FREDERICK GREEN was born in 1890 in Tewkesbury to George Green and Ellen (formerly Mew). Ellen was from Tewkesbury and George was from Oxenton. In 1911 the family was living at 27 Barton Street, and the Census shows they had eight children of whom seven were still living. George's occupation was listed as 'Forage Stores Labourer' but Frederick was 'Out of Work'. Frederick was a former pupil of Holy Trinity Church Schools and in 1915 he was working at H.M. Provender Stores, Ashchurch. George died in 1916 at the age of 72.

Frederick enlisted in Tewkesbury in 1915, probably as part of the 'Derby Scheme' and joined the 13th Battalion (Pioneers) of the Gloucester Regiment. The battalion, initially of Forest of Dean miners, was formed at Malvern in December 1914 and adopted by the War Office on 12 July 1915; it was attached the following month as Pioneers to the 39th Division and landed in France on 3 March 1916. According to the *Tewkesbury Register*, Frederick went to France in autumn 1916 as a replacement for Somme casualties.

In March 1918 the 39th Division was part of the British Fifth Army who were holding the line in the southern part of the sector that had been targeted by the Germans as part of *Operation Michael*, the first phase of the campaign which became known as the German Spring Offensive. On 20 March 1918 the 13th Gloucesters were reinforcing the sector that was most likely to be attacked by the Germans. They had been preparing fortifications behind the lines when the German attack broke in the early hours of 21 March; the battalion then moved close to the

front line and worked on connecting defensive trench systems. The men went into huts to rest but, during the night, one of the huts was struck by a shell and an entire company was wiped out. Lt. Henderson Bland said: '*it was in this village that during the night of the 21st/22nd a company of the 13th Gloucesters was totally destroyed while sleeping in a large hut. An Austrian shell with an instantaneous fuse, that had a sort of lateral action when detonated, hit the roof of the hut and wiped them all out.*' 41 men were killed and about 20 wounded.

Owing to enemy pressure, the battalion was ordered to retire; there was no time to bury the dead and some of the wounded may also have been left behind. The dead were buried by the Germans where they fell and, by 1925, they had been exhumed and re-interred.

The *Tewkesbury Register* reported on 13 April 1918 that '*Mrs. George Green, a widow of Providence Place, has, we regret to report, received official news that her youngest son, Private Frederick Green, was killed in action on the 23rd March. ... He had been on active service about 18 months when he laid down his life for his country.*'

Private Frederick Green was among those killed on 22 March 1918 and is buried in *Peronne Communal Cemetery Extension* in Peronne, France. He is one of a number of men who could be identified collectively but not individually and is therefore commemorated by a special memorial headstone bearing the inscription: '*Buried near this spot*'. Perhaps because his body was not interred until 1925, his name was omitted from the War Memorial.