

SERGEANT THOMAS HALL

12769, 10th (Service) Battalion, Gloucestershire Regiment

Died aged 30 on 25 September 1915

Buried with honour at **Dud Corner Cemetery, Loos, France**; VI B 16

Commemorated in Tewkesbury at the Cross and in the Abbey



Dud Corner Cemetery, Loos



Sgt. Thomas Hall [Graphic]



Gloucestershire Regiment

THOMAS HALL was born in Tewkesbury in 1885, the son of John Hall and Ellen (formerly Smith), who had married in 1876. He was an old pupil of Holy Trinity Schools and, in the 1901 census, he is listed as living at The Foresters Arms, 45 High Street, where his father was the Publican; Thomas was by then a Baker. In 1904 he was fined for refusing to pay a fine liable to the Tewkesbury Volunteers because he, along with others, 'had not made themselves efficient, thereby losing great coat and equipment allowances ...'. This was an evident aberration since the *Register* recorded that 'for nine years he was a member of the local Volunteer Company, and for two years held the Courtney Lord Challenge Cup for shooting'. On 5 November 1906 Thomas married Sarah Barnfield and in 1911 they were living with two daughters in Laurel Cottage, Oldbury Road; he was working as a corn porter. However, his career evidently soon changed: 'Before joining the Army at the call of his King, he represented the Pearl Insurance Company in Tewkesbury, and was a quiet, well conducted young man, popular with all who knew him.'

Thomas enlisted in Tewkesbury in the Gloucestershire Regiment and was posted to the new 10th Battalion, formed at Bristol in September 1914 as part of Kitchener's New Army. Presumably because of his previous experience, he quickly became an NCO. After training in Cheltenham and on Salisbury Plain, the battalion landed in France on 8 August 1915 when it joined the 1st Division, replacing a regular Guards battalion. It was soon involved in

the *Battle of Loos* (25 September-18 October 1915), the largest British offensive mounted in 1915, undertaken in support of the French offensives. The *Register* reported: 'The battle took place in an area utterly unsuited to an attack; the battle was noteworthy for the first use of poison gas by the British Army. Despite heavy casualties, there was considerable success on the first day ... but the opportunities could not be exploited, resulting in a costly stalemate.'

The 10th Battalion, Gloucestershire Regiment, was one of the lead battalions and achieved all its objectives. However, the War Diary confirmed the 'accompaniment of gas and smoke ... The wind proved more favourable to the enemy than ourselves ...'. During the battle the Battalion suffered 459 casualties.

Sergeant Thomas Hall was killed in action on 25 September 1915, the opening day of the battle, along with **Lance Cpl. A. Harrison** [†], **Cpl. J. Simms** [†] and **Pte. E. Nunney** [†].

The news of his death was received by his wife in a postcard from Private William Woolcott, conveying the message: '... that your husband was killed in action whilst leading his men ...'. Thomas Hall's body was one of those recovered and he is buried in **Dud Corner Cemetery** at Loos. He qualified for the '1914-15 Star' medal. Thomas left a widow and two young children.

His younger brothers also served: **Private Reginald Hall** [†], Machine Gun Corps, died in 1917 but **Lance Corporal Frederick C. Hall** of the 8th Battalion, Gloucestershire Regiment, survived the war.