

LANCE CORPORAL ARTHUR HARRISON

17281, 10th Battalion, Gloucestershire Regiment

Died aged 45 on 25 September 1915

Buried with honour in **Dud Corner Cemetery, Loos**; IV H 17

Commemorated in Tewkesbury at the Cross and in the Abbey



*Dud Corner Cemetery,
Loos, France*



*L/Cpl. A. Harrison
[Graphic 22/7/1916]*



*Gloucestershire
Regiment*

ARTHUR HARRISON was only a Tewkesburian by adoption: he was born in May 1870 in Accrington, Lancashire, the son of Benjamin Harrison and Matilda (formerly Sutcliffe), known locally as the ‘Accrington Poetess’. He married there, on 13 April 1895, Annie Isabella Cook, aged 20, and they had two daughters, Gladys and Gertrude. His father was then described as a textile industry ‘foreman’. By 1901 Arthur had followed his profession to Heavitree in Devon, before arriving in Tewkesbury at Holy Trinity Schools in 1906. In 1911 the family was living in Sybil Road, Gloucester, and Arthur was still an Assistant Schoolmaster. He was also a member of the Tewkesbury Volunteer Training Corps: ‘*the first of those who enlisted from that body to lay down his life*’.

Not surprisingly Arthur was a volunteer, commemorated in the Abbey, having enlisted on 28 December 1914 into a Kitchener ‘new’ battalion, the 10th Gloucesters. The *Tewkesbury Register* recorded his service in January 1915: he ‘*was last week promoted corporal, and has been occupied in giving instruction in physical drill. He proceeds to-day to the Army Gymnastics School, in order to obtain his certificate, after which he will be promoted to Sergt ...*’. The battalion was billeted in Cheltenham during the winter, before final training on Salisbury Plain.

The battalion arrived in France on 8 August 1915, just in time for the ‘Big Advance’ at Loos. ‘*Taking place on ground not of their choosing and before stocks of ammunition and heavy artillery were sufficient, the opening of 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 in breaking into the deep enemy positions near Loos.’ The 10th Gloucesters were one of the lead battalions (that had replaced regular Guards battalions) and they advanced through all objectives despite heavy casualties.

Lance Corporal Arthur Harrison died on 25 September 1915, on the opening day of the battle. The *Register* produced an obituary: ‘*His wife received a letter from Pte. W. H. Thomas, of the 2nd Welsh Regiment, informing her that Corpl. Harrison was shot through the head and instantly killed, whilst advancing towards the German front ... The headmaster of the schools conveyed the sad news to the pupils, and it was received with much sorrow. It was only on the 19th September that the deceased soldier wrote the children thanking them for a parcel which they had sent him. His age was 43, and he leaves a widow and two grown-up daughters.*’ He is buried in **Dud Corner Cemetery**, Loos. The 10th Battalion lost 459 other men, including **Cpl. J. Simms, Pte. E. Nunney and Sgt. T. Hall [all †]**.

Arthur was not forgotten in his home town, partly because of the fame of his mother. The local newspaper recalled that ‘*he was very popular in those days and was a prominent member of the Baptist Cricket Club. ... [after volunteering] his smartness and efficiency soon gained him promotion. His Quarter-Master Sergeant [wrote to his widow]: “Believe me, all of No. 2 Company – that is all that is left of them – keenly share your sorrow”.*’

Soon after Arthur’s death, Annie and her two daughters returned to the north, to her father’s family in Morecambe.