

LANCE CORPORAL HARRY KNIGHT

12575, 2nd/4th Battalion, Gloucestershire Regiment

Died aged 31 on 27 August 1917

Remembered with honour on *Tyne Cot Memorial, Ypres*; Panel 72 to 75

Commemorated in Tewkesbury in the Methodist Church on the Congregational Chapel
Memorial Plaque and on Forthampton Memorial



Tyne Cot Memorial, Ypres, Belgium



1914-15 Star Medal



Gloucestershire Regiment

HARRY KNIGHT was born in Northamptonshire in 1886, the son of Thomas Knight, a railway platelayer, and his wife Emma, who moved to Tewkesbury in 1907. In 1911 Harry was living and working as an estate gardener at Stoke Poges in Buckinghamshire.

Harry volunteered on 2 September 1914 and was recognised by the *Tewkesbury Register* on 17 October as one of the '*Tewkesbury Y.M.C.A. Men Gone To The War*'. His younger brother, Frank, was another. On 14 November 1914 his promotion to Lance Corporal was announced (as was that of Frank) and his opinion of the role was recorded in October by the *Tewkesbury Record*: '*The Lance-Corporals have to dish out the 'grub', and it is like feeding the lions at the Zoo, for all of us have splendid appetites. Food is generally plentiful. We get a variation now – Drill Musketry – route marches, night attacks, etc., and the majority of us enjoy it.'*

His medal roll confirms that he was a Lance Corporal and that he had embarked for France on 20 September 1915 (at the same time as his brother), thus gaining the '*1914-15 Star*' medal. He was serving with the 9th Battalion, which was transferred to the Salonika (Greece) Front after two months where, according to the *Register*, he was wounded. He may well have been sent home for a time when he was transferred to the 2nd/4th Battalion which, by 1917, was fighting in the *Battle of Passchendaele*. The attacks on 27 August were minor operations which were costly and inconclusive so these operations were halted amidst tempestuous weather. The battalion took part in an attack, alongside the 2/8th Worcesters,

to capture part of the German third line. Unfortunately the attack was unsuccessful, according to the Battalion War Diary: '*the failure to reach the objectives was chiefly due to the mud and to the men having to lie in water for 12 hours prior to the attack*'.

Lance Corporal Harry Knight was killed in action on 27 August 1917. The *Register* carried a report that acting '*Cpl. Harry Knight of Tredington Lodge was killed by machine gun fire; [he was one] of the best gunners and was killed in advance upon a strong German position*'. **Private Samuel Hathaway** [†], and 181 of the same battalion, were killed on the same day. The obituary also noted that his mother had '*lost two sons within 5 days*'. Harry's younger brother, **Sgt. Ernest Knight** [†] of the 2nd/5th Battalion, had been killed on 22 August in the same sector. The bodies of the two brothers were never recovered and their names are recorded in the same area of the *Tyne Cot Memorial*. Ernest was never commemorated locally.

The third brother, **Frank Henry Knight** (born 1894), not only survived the war but was commissioned as an officer in 1918. He returned to Tewkesbury to become one of our most historically prominent citizens by being made secretary of the Tewkesbury Building Society in 1933 and being four times Mayor. His fame survived his death when the Alderman Knight School was named in his honour.

Harry Knight is commemorated on the memorial in Forthampton. There is no evidence of his family living there but in 1911 they were living in Tredington. Although his brother was killed within days of him, his name was not included.