

LANCE CORPORAL FREDERICK MAYALL

240873, 13th (Service) Battalion (Forest of Dean) (Pioneers), Gloucestershire Regiment

Died aged 21 on 17 September 1917

Buried with honour at *Voormezele Cemetery Enclosures Nos. 1 & 2, Ypres*; I J 6

Commemorated in Tewkesbury at the Cross and in the Abbey



*Voormezele Cemetery
Enclosures Nos. 1 & 2*



*L/Cpl. Mayall in 1915, an
'Abbey Boy' [Graphic]*



*Gloucestershire
Regiment*

FREDERICK MAYALL was born in Tewkesbury in 1896 to Samuel Mayall and Priscilla (formerly Hovey), one of five sons and three daughters. Samuel Mayall's occupation on the 1911 Census was described as 'Miller Machine-man'. In 1901 and 1911 the family home was on Mill Bank

Frederick originally enlisted in the Gloucestershire Regiment in early September 1914, at the same time as his cousin William Mayall, and was photographed with the Vicar as an 'Abbey Boy'. On 15 May 1915 he was assigned to the 1/5th Battalion, a Territorial Force formation, part of the 145th Brigade, 48th (South Midland) Division, which had landed at Boulogne on 29 March 1915. Frederick's medal records note that he was posted to France on 25 June 1915 and that he was awarded the '1914-15 Star' medal.

According to his obituary in the *Tewkesbury Record*, he was wounded during the battles of the Somme, after which he enjoyed leave back home. He was said to be an expert bomber and, being an excellent marksman, had acted as a sniper. He was 6'2" tall.

After being wounded, Frederick was transferred to the 13th (Service) Battalion (Forest of Dean) (Pioneers) of the Gloucestershire Regiment and promoted to Acting Corporal. This battalion had been formed at Malvern in December 1914 and adopted by the War Office on 12 July 1915. The battalion was attached the following month as Divisional Pioneers to the 39th Division and landed in France on 3 March

1916. The job of a Pioneer unit entailed hard manual labour and included digging trenches, wiring and building encampments for other troops, as well as ordinary infantry work. They were paid an extra two pence a day. Many were miners from the Forest of Dean and other coal-fields, as well as labourers from the 'Three Counties' of Worcestershire, Herefordshire and Gloucestershire.

Lance Corporal Frederick Mayall was killed on 17 September 1917 during the *Third Battle of Ypres*, sometimes referred to as *Passchendaele*. It comprised a series of set-piece battles and Frederick was killed just days before the start of the third phase, the *Battle of the Menin Road Ridge*, which was a particularly successful action. Part of the reason for the success was the meticulous preparation for the offensive, an aspect in which Pioneer battalions would have been heavily involved. Frederick may well have been killed whilst preparing the ground to give the infantry assault battalions the maximum chance of success.

Frederick's commanding officer and chaplain wrote to his mother recording that he was one of a group of five men of the 13th Gloucesters killed by the same shellburst. His body was recovered and buried at *Voormezele Cemetery*, near Ypres.

His brother, **Thomas Mayall**, serving in the Coldstream Guards, became a POW in October 1917 and survived the war.