

PRIVATE JOHN CHRISTOPHER MAYALL

2725, 2nd Battalion, Gloucestershire Regiment [later 413421, Labour Corps]

Died aged 54 in June 1925

Buried without Military Honour in *Tewkesbury Cemetery*; C-687

Commemorated in Tewkesbury on the Abbey Memorial to Volunteers



*J. C. Mayall's Grandson
looking for his unmarked grave (2014)*



*Pte. J. C. Mayall
with Boer War medals*



*Gloucestershire
Regiment*

JOHN CHRISTOPHER MAYALL was born in Tewkesbury in 1871 to John (a labourer) and Emma (formerly King); in 1881 they were living in Bleach Yard, Oldbury Road (now Haywards) with three children. Emma died in 1892 aged 56 and in September 1893 John senior re-married to Florence Amy E. Burrows; they had two further children. By 1911 John Christopher was a house painter, living at 2 Smiths Lane, High Street.

John Christopher was a long-serving and much travelled soldier. He enlisted as a regular in the Gloucestershire Regiment in October 1889 aged 18, having previously served in the 4th (Militia) Battalion. During his seven years with the Colours, he saw service with the 1st Battalion in Ireland, India (1892) and Malta (1893). On completion of his full-time service he was transferred to the Reserve in April 1897 for a further five years. He was recalled to the Colours in November 1899 and served until July 1902, including over two years' active service in South Africa during the **Boer War**. He was then discharged with a gratuity for 12 years reckonable service although he did extend his commitment as a Reservist up to 1907.

At the outbreak of war John attested as a Special Reservist in Tewkesbury on 31 August 1914. He spent the first few months on home service, initially with the 8th Battalion, a Kitcheners' Army unit, then briefly with the T.A. 5th Battalion, before being posted to the 2nd Battalion, a pre-war regular unit which he joined in France in February 1915. The battalion, part of the 27th Division, suffered 503 casualties during the *Second Battle of Ypres* (22 April-25 May 1915). The division was sent to Macedonia in November 1915 but John was posted to the 1st

Battalion, his old unit, after serious losses at *Loos*. He was awarded the '1914-15 Star' medal.

John Mayall remained with his Battalion for nearly two years, the Division taking part in a number of the *Battles of the Somme 1916*, as well as the *Retreat to the Hindenburg Line 1917*.

On 16 October John was transferred to the Labour Corps, formed in January 1917, which was manned by those rated below the 'A1' condition needed for front-line service; many were soldiers who had been wounded and were returning to duty. Regarded as something of a second-class organisation, the men who died are commemorated under their original regiment, with Labour Corps being secondary.

Private John Mayall was posted to Area Employment Company 598, used in 1917 for salvage work; he survived the war and was demobilised on 25 March 1919, at the age of 48, into Army Reserve Class Z.

John was living in Wilkes Alley, as a house painter, when he suffered a stroke in 1925 at the age of only 54. The report of his funeral on 1 July 1925 mentioned that he had been '*for some years in the Gloucestershire Regiment*' and that the '*deceased was carried to his last resting place by four old soldiers*'. No doubt because of family circumstances his grave in *Tewkesbury Cemetery* has no headstone, family or CWGC.

Although his death came well before the list of those to be included on the War Memorial was finalised, his name was not incorporated. His war service is only commemorated in Tewkesbury on the *Abbey Memorial to Volunteers*.

John Christopher Mayall was the grandfather of Phil Mayall, in 2014, for many years, Sacristan of Tewkesbury Borough Cemetery.