

PRIVATE HENRY NEWMAN

7861, 1st Battalion, Loyal North Lancashire Regiment

Died aged 27 on 25 September 1914

Buried with honour at *Vendresse British Cemetery, France*; III F 3

Commemorated in Tewkesbury at the Cross and in the Abbey



*Vendresse British Cemetery,
Aisne, France*



*Regiment Memorial,
Vendresse*



*Loyal North
Lancashire Regiment*

■ **Henry Newman was the first Tewkesbury death of the Great War** ■
(listed in error on Tewkesbury War Memorial as 'C. Newman')

HENRY NEWMAN was born in Tewkesbury in 1886 to Thomas Newman (Dr. Devereux's coachman) and his wife Emily, both of whom had settled in the town and were living at 80 High Street (now demolished and site occupied by the Library). His father had died by 1901 and Henry was living as a boarder in Cardiff, working as an errand boy. By the 1911 Census, he was serving with the 2nd Battalion, Gloucestershire Regiment, and was stationed at Verdala Barracks, Malta. However, his obituary stated that, after being educated at the Abbey School, he left Tewkesbury to take up '*another situation*' in Lancashire where he rejoined the regular army for a short term before leaving for the reserves.

The regiment that he rejoined on the outbreak of war was the Loyal North Lancashire. The Battalion was one of the first to land in France on 12 August 1914 and took part in the *Battle of Mons*, the *Retreat to the Marne* and the *Battle of Aisne*. Henry's regiment was in the same division as the 1st Gloucesters and shared their experience but on 14 September the battalion made a 'splendid effort' in capturing a prominent sugar mill. That was the end of success for the British Expeditionary Force (BEF) as the Germans had dug in north of the Aisne and were

using machine-guns and artillery to deadly effect. The climax came with the BEF trying to dislodge the Germans from their defences in the *Battle of Chemin les Dames* and to counter attacks. On 25 September the battalion fought desperately to stop one enemy advance. Such was the ferocity of the fighting and so high were the casualties that a memorial to the battalion was subsequently raised there at Vendresse.

Private Henry Newman was reported missing in the trench warfare which followed. It was not until 1915 that his family learned he had been wounded and taken prisoner by the Germans at Laôn – but had immediately died of his wounds. His body was eventually recovered and his grave is in nearby *Vendresse British Cemetery*. This cemetery was created after the Armistice when graves were collected from cemeteries in the surrounding battlefields, of those killed in the 1914 battles of the *Marne* and *Aisne*. Henry does not appear to have been awarded the '*1914 (Mons) Star*' which is illogical as he was awarded a clasp for fighting during the period 5 August to 22 November 1914. There is some dispute about his age at death – CWGC states 27 years but the *Register* has 28 years which seems the more accurate.