

PRIVATE ARTHUR HARRY ROWLEY

54199, Durham Light Infantry

Died aged 23 on 16 April 1921

Buried without CWGC recognition in *Tewkesbury Cemetery*; C-502

Commemorated in Tewkesbury at the Cross and in the Abbey



Area of unmarked graves, including A.H. Rowley C-502



Durham Light Infantry

ARTHUR HARRY ROWLEY was born in Tewkesbury in 1897, the youngest son of George Rowley and Rachel Jane (formerly Smith). George was originally from Highnam, Leicestershire; he ran a bakery from the family home at 6 Church Street. Rachel was born in Tewkesbury where they married in 1880. They had six children: one died in infancy, two were killed in the war and Arthur died of wounds in 1921. George died in 1909; Rachel then kept a shop at 88 High Street (now the shopping centre). In 1911 the family lived at Malvern View, Mill Road.

Arthur joined the Durham Light Infantry, probably in 1916 as a conscript, although there is no evidence to identify which battalion he was posted to nor the date. Based on the date he was wounded, it is likely that he was in one of the regiment's battalions in the 50th (Northumbrian) Division. In April 1917 the division took part in the *Arras Offensive*, then the only major campaign in which British forces were involved; the division fought in the *Second Battle of the Scarpe* (23-24 April 1917) which coincides with the date on which Arthur was wounded. In May 1917, both Tewkesbury newspapers reported that he was wounded: *'in right thigh on 23 April'* and that *'a bullet passed through the fleshy part of the right thigh, and that he walked 3½ miles to the dressing station. He is now in hospital in Manchester and doing well'*. Arthur's obituary in 1921 confirmed these details but added that *'he experienced a good deal of hard service abroad where he was wounded and gassed'*. As he later served in the Army of Occupation, he must have recovered sufficiently from his wound to return to front-line service.

Private Arthur Harry Rowley died on 16 April 1921, according to the *Register* *'at his mother's residence on Saturday evening last'*. It added that he had *'served in the Great War and at its close was for a time with the British Army of Occupation in Cologne. Upon leaving the Army he went to work in Birmingham but his constitution was unable to withstand the effects of his military service and tuberculosis set in and he lay ill for many months. He was a quiet steady young man and held in high regard by all who knew him. In his earlier days he was employed at the Office of this journal, where his conscientious regard for his duties, the willing and thorough manner in which he carried them out, and his polite and cheery disposition won the affectionate esteem of all for and with whom he worked. The funeral took place on 21 April 1921. The bearers were all ex-Service men. Much sympathy is expressed towards Mrs. Rowley who has also experienced the bitter sorrow of losing two other sons killed in action in the War. Of four sons only one [Frederick] now survives'*.

Private Arthur Rowley was buried, with ex-Servicemen as bearers, in a grave in **Tewkesbury Cemetery** without CWGC recognition. His name was the last addition to the *Abbey Memorial to the Fallen* and he is also commemorated in Tewkesbury at the Cross.

Arthur's brothers who died were **Pte. Harold E.** [†] in 1916 on the Somme and **Pte. Herbert G.** [†] in 1917 in Iraq. The Rowley family lost three sons, as did Mrs. Letitia Didcote, who was accorded the honour of inaugurating the War Memorial in May 1922. All the Rowley family seem to have left the town by 1939.