

PRIVATE HAROLD GILBERT STUBBS

16816, 2nd Battalion, Grenadier Guards

Died aged 20 on 4 November 1914

Buried with honour in *Boulogne Eastern Cemetery, France*; III B 32

Commemorated in Tewkesbury at the Cross and in the Abbey,
also on the War Memorial at St Mary's Church, Norton



*Boulogne Eastern
Cemetery, France*



*Pte. H.G. Stubbs [Graphic]
9/12/1914, Missing*



20/3/1915, KIA



*Grenadier
Guards*

HAROLD GILBERT STUBBS was born in 1894 in Norton to Francis Herbert Stubbs, a carpenter and blacksmith, and Eliza Ann (formerly Hancock). Eliza died in December 1900 and, on the 1901 census, Francis was living in Norton as a widower caring for three sons and a daughter. In September 1901 he married Norah Ellen Buttle in Winchcombe and by 1911 the family, including three more children, had moved to Tewkesbury. Initially living at 23 Barton Street, by 1919 they had moved to the Ashchurch Road. Harold cannot be found on the 1911 census although it is known that, prior to joining the army, he worked on the restoration of Bredon Church.

Harold Stubbs enlisted in 1913 at the age of 19 as a regular soldier in the 2nd Battalion, Grenadier Guards, which was part of 4th (Guards) Brigade in the 2nd Infantry Division. The Battalion disembarked at Le Havre on 14 August 1914, along with 1st Battalion, Gloucestershire Regiment. In Belgium the Division participated in many actions, including the *Battle of Mons* (23 August) and subsequent retreat, also the *Battles of the Marne* (7-10 September) and the *Aisne* (12-15 September). At the end of the month the British Expeditionary Force (BEF) moved north to Flanders to protect the vital Channel ports and to take part in an Allied attempt to outflank the Germans (the 'Race to the Sea'), culminating in a series of battles known as the *Battles of Ypres 1914* (19 October-22 November); afterwards only four officers and 140 men of the Battalion remained fit for action.

Private Harold Gilbert Stubbs was wounded in action on 2 November 1914 and died two days later. On 5 November Francis

Stubbs received official notification that Harold had been wounded in action, but by the time this news was received Harold had already died of his wounds. His fate was well covered by the *Graphic*, which published two photographs of him: one when reported missing and another when his death was confirmed. At the time Harold was wounded there was no specific battle taking place but the Battalion War Diary noted that his Battalion was one of three that relieved the Cavalry Division near Ypres on 30 October. In the following week, the Diary reports that it was frequently subjected to heavy shelling and attacks from German infantry. On 2 November, the day on which Harold is reported to have been wounded, the Diary commented that there were '*intermittent attacks and shelling all day*' and that the casualties for that day were four killed, 12 wounded and one missing. It is reasonable to assume that Harold was one of the 12 wounded. It seems that he was then evacuated to a hospital in Boulogne, one of the three main base ports used by the BEF, where he died of his wounds on 4 November. He was buried in *Boulogne Eastern Cemetery* where, unusually, the headstones are laid flat due to the sandy soil.

Private Harold Stubbs was awarded the '*1914 (Mons) Star and Clasp*' to acknowledge that he had served under fire. His older brother, **Herbert William Stubbs**, survived the war. He had been a pre-war regular soldier in the Royal Field Artillery but joined the Newcastle Police force in 1912. As a reservist he was recalled on the outbreak of war. He joined the army as a private soldier but reached the rank of Captain by the end of the war.