

GUARDSMAN GEORGE HENRY TAYLOR

3335, 3rd Battalion, Coldstream Guards

Died aged 39 on 21 April 1922

Buried with honour in *Tewkesbury Cemetery*; C-548

Commemorated in Tewkesbury at the Cross



Area of unmarked graves, including G.H. Taylor C-548



1914-15 Star Medal



Coldstream Guards

GEORGE HENRY TAYLOR was born in Tewkesbury in 1882, the eldest son of Henry Taylor and Mary Ann (formerly Underwood). Henry was a House Painter, born in Belper, Derbyshire, and Mary came from Tewkesbury. She died in 1900 aged 38, leaving behind seven children. In 1901 the family was living in Sweets Court, Smith's Lane. In 1911 George was visiting his brother Joseph at 26 Spring Gardens when his occupation is described as General Labourer. His father was bringing up the family in Eagles Alley, High Street. It is likely that George was educated at Trinity School; in October 1914 the headmaster claimed that he was one of their volunteers.

George's army service can be traced back to 1899, when on 6 July he applied in Tewkesbury to join the 4th (Militia) Battalion, Gloucestershire Regiment, for six years. His attestation papers gave his address as Smiths Lane and a false age of 18; he was not yet 17, which would only have been an issue in relation to overseas service. His occupation was given as a Labourer working for a Mr. Saunders. The papers also revealed that George had previously served in the 2nd Volunteer Battalion, Gloucestershire Regiment. He was described as '5'8" tall, weight 121lbs, fair complexion, ... brown eyes and hair ... religion Baptist.' George served in the Militia from 6 July 1899 to 5 February 1900 but his attestation papers noted that he enlisted in the Coldstream Guards on 6 February 1900 which would have meant becoming a full-time regular soldier. There is no further detail of George's military career until the outbreak of the war; the evidence suggests that he completed his service with the Colours and then transferred to the Army Reserve. He had left the Army by 1911.

As a Reservist, George was recalled to the Colours and joined the 3rd Battalion, Coldstream Guards, in September/October 1914. This was a pre-war regular battalion, originally part of the 4th (Guards) Brigade, 2nd Division, although it was later transferred between different Guards Brigades and Divisions. The battalion was part of the original British Expeditionary Force, landing in France on 13 August 1914 and serving on the Western Front, taking part in most of the major battles and campaigns. According to his medal records George arrived in France on 22 January 1915, qualifying for the '1914-15 Star' medal. He was promoted to Corporal and then to Lance Sergeant.

It can be assumed that L/Sgt. Taylor served in 1915, at the *Battle of Loos* in September; in 1916, during the *Battles of the Somme*, notably the *Battle of Flers-Courcelette*; in 1917, the *German Retreat to the Hindenburg Line*, the *Third Battle of Ypres* and the *Battle of Cambrai*; and, in 1918, the German Spring Offensive in March and April, and 'The Last 100 Days' from August to November.

Despite this long and gruelling service, **Sgt. George Henry Taylor** survived the war and was living at 2 Spring Gardens when he died on 21 April 1922. He was accorded a Military Funeral but was buried in the *Tewkesbury Borough Cemetery* on 22 April without CWGC recognition. The funeral report in the *Register* on 29 April 1922 referred to him as 'Ex Sergeant George H. Taylor of Spring Gardens, age 39, 3rd Battalion Coldstream Guards'. Sgt. Taylor's death was too late for his name to be included on the *Abbey Memorial to the Fallen* but his name was included on the Memorial at the Cross.