

PRIVATE GEORGE TURBERVILLE

290894, 1st/7th Cheshire Regiment

Died aged 22 on 5 October 1918

Buried with honour at *Hooge Crater Cemetery, Ypres, Belgium*; XIV K 8

Commemorated in Tewkesbury at the Cross and in the Abbey



Hooge Crater Cemetery, Ypres



1914-15 Star Medal



Cheshire Regiment

GEORGE TURBERVILLE was born in 1896 in Tewkesbury to George Turberville and Ellen (formerly Hodges). George senior was an Agricultural Labourer born in Bushley, whilst Ellen came from Longdon. After George junior's birth, the family returned to Longdon and two sisters were born there. Between 1901 and 1910 the family moved back to Tewkesbury to live in Old Baptist Chapel Court, Church Street, where another sister was born in 1910. George junior was educated at the Abbey School, and was briefly in the employ of Mr. Gosling of Twynning, a coal merchant and haulier. In 1911 his occupation was described as Errand Boy.

George volunteered for military service in March 1915; for some reason, he decided to join the Cheshire Regiment and travelled to Macclesfield where he enlisted. He was posted to the 1st/7th Battalion, a first-line Territorial Force unit; in May 1915 the formation became the 159th Infantry Brigade in the 53rd (Welsh) Division. The division sailed for Gallipoli in July 1915 and George's medal records confirm that he reached there on 8 August 1915, thereby qualifying for the '1914-15 Star' medal. By December, the effects of fighting, lack of reinforcements and weather conditions had reduced the division to just 162 officers and 2428 men (about 15% of its full strength), so it was withdrawn from Gallipoli and sent to Egypt.

In the next two and a half years the division took part in numerous actions as part of the Palestine campaign and served in Palestine until the Armistice there on 31 October 1918. The 1st/7th Battalion, Cheshire Regiment, was one of a number of units transferred out of the division

in the middle of 1918; the battalion was sent to France on 1 June 1918 and came under the command of the 102nd Infantry Brigade in the 34th Division.

According to George's obituary in the *Tewkesbury Register*: 'after enjoying fourteen days leave, he was sent to France on 12 September 1917 but, a year later, he was killed instantaneously by a shell on Saturday 5 October 1918'. (Unfortunately, there is no obvious answer to the discrepancy between the date George was said to have returned to France after leave, and the movement dates of his battalion.) The chaplain claimed that 'his death [was] instantaneous. His comrades dug the grave, and I read the service over him. A temporary cross has been put up, and a permanent one will be erected as soon as possible'. He went on to describe him as 'very popular and a good all round man ... brave and keen on work'; a letter from a fellow soldier confirmed his popularity.

Private George Turberville was killed in action on 5 October 1918. At that time his division was part of the Second Army in Flanders and at the forefront of the campaign known as 'The Last Hundred Days' that saw the Allies inflict a series of crushing defeats on the German Army, culminating in the Armistice. The *Battle of Ypres 1918* had finished a few days before George was killed and it was nearly another two weeks before the next phase of the offensive, so it is reasonable to assume that his death was due to the random shelling typical of the Ypres Salient. He was probably buried initially in one of the battlefield cemeteries and then re-interred in *Hooge Crater Cemetery* after the Armistice.