

CORPORAL HOWARD WARNER

40260, 1st/8th Battalion, Worcestershire Regiment

Died aged 21 on 3 August 1918

Remembered with honour on the *Giavera Memorial, Italy*

Commemorated in Tewkesbury at the Cross, in the Abbey and on the Grammar School Memorial;
also at Dean Close School, Cheltenham, and on the R.G.H. Memorial, Gloucester Cathedral



Giavera Memorial to the Missing



Cpl. Howard Warner



Worcestershire Regiment

HOWARD WARNER was born on 1 September 1896 at Lowesmoor Farm, near the village of Luckington, Malmesbury, Wiltshire. He was the youngest of three sons of Edward Poulton Warner and Annie (formerly Phelps). They married in Tewkesbury in 1891. In 1901 Edward was farming in Elmore, Gloucester, but by 1911 the family had moved to Southwick Park Farm, Tewkesbury, with 148 acres bought for £6,000 in 1906. Howard was educated firstly at the Grammar School and then Dean Close School, Cheltenham, from April 1911 to December 1912.

Howard and his two brothers volunteered in October 1914; as farmer's sons they elected to join The Royal Gloucestershire Hussars (Yeomanry). However, as the need for cavalry rapidly diminished with the switch from mobile warfare to entrenched siege warfare, the brothers were sent to different units; Howard went to the 1st/8th Battalion, Worcestershire Regiment.

This battalion was formed originally in April 1908 as part of the Territorial Force whose pre-war role was confined to home defence; such units were not intended to be used for overseas service. On the outbreak of war members were mobilised and asked to volunteer for overseas service. The 1st/8th landed at Boulogne on 31 March 1915. The battalion's formation was re-named as the 144th Infantry Brigade, 48th (South Midland) Division. Howard did not receive the '1914-15 Star' medal so he may have been drafted in as a later replacement.

The 48th Division was transferred to Italy on 24 November 1917 after two and a half years on

the Western Front. Italy had joined the war on the Allied side in May 1915 but, by 1918, its Army was on the defensive and required support from British and French forces. In March 1918, XIV Corps (including the 48th Division) relieved Italian troops on the front line between Asiago and Canove. The front was comparatively quiet until the Austrians attacked in force in the *Battle of Asiago* (15-16 June 1918). Howard survived this battle but was recorded as 'killed in action' on 3 August 1918 at a time when no major action appears to have been taking place.

Howard's last letter home, dated 23 July 1918, read: 'Dear Father ... *We shall very soon be home by what I here of things in France & Germaney. I have been doing a little work while we have been on rest on a farm cutting corn. We are up the line again [shortly]. Some of the fellows have been going down for a week down to Rome. I am stoping till I get a little more money and go down and see the country. ... Yours truly, H. Warner*' [original spelling]

Corporal Howard Warner's body was never recovered and his name is commemorated on the *Giavera Memorial to the Missing* in Italy. He was the third and last Tewkesbury soldier to be killed on the Italian Front.

Howard's brothers survived the war: Frank with the Worcestershire Regiment and Rowland with the 12th (Bristol) Battalion, Gloucestershire Regiment. Rowland fought on the Somme, 1916, and was wounded at Passchendaele in 1917. After being repatriated, his ship was sunk. He lived at Southwick Farm until his death in 1981.