

PRIVATE HENRY JOHN WAYLEN

2740TF, 1/5th Battalion, Gloucestershire Regiment

Died aged 30 on 2 May 1917

Buried in *Tewkesbury Borough Cemetery*, 5788 Grave C-281

Commemorated in Tewkesbury at the Cross and in the Abbey



Tewkesbury Borough Cemetery [A. Skelsey]



1914-15 Star Medal



Gloucestershire Regiment

HENRY JOHN WAYLEN was born in June 1885 to Edwin Waylen and Emily (formerly Teale). Edwin was born in Berwick Bassett in Wiltshire whilst Emily came from Overbury. They had a total of six children of whom five were still alive in 1911. Edwin married Emily in Tewkesbury in 1877 and settled in the town, his occupation described variously as groom, ostler or coachman. By 1901 the family was living in one of the four Laurel Cottages, Parsons Row, Oldbury Road, and Henry was a pupil at the Holy Trinity Schools. In 1911 Henry was still living at home and working as a gardener.

Henry had served as a part-time soldier before the war in the 5th Battalion, Gloucestershire Regiment, one of its three Territorial Force units. He served from 1908 until 1913 when his time expired. The units had just departed for their annual summer camp when war broke out in August 1914 and they were at once recalled and mobilised. Henry volunteered soon afterwards to re-join his battalion and attested at Tewkesbury on 1 September 1914. The battalion was split into two with the men in the first-line unit (1st/5th) agreeing to overseas service whilst the second-line unit (2nd/5th) remained in the UK for home service only. Henry went to France with the 1st/5th Battalion, landing at Boulogne on 29 March 1915. The battalion became part of the 145th Infantry Brigade, in the 48th (South Midland) Division, but was not involved in any major actions during the rest of 1915.

Henry's pension records indicate that he was

transferred to the Salonika front in Greece on 1 January 1916, presumably to join one of the regiment's other battalions already there, although there is no indication on any records of which unit he actually joined (Henry's original battalion, 1st/5th, remained on the Western Front before moving to Italy in 1917). Despite having suffered no previous illnesses, he contracted a cough in January but remained in Salonika until he returned to England on 10 July 1916. Henry was then diagnosed with tuberculosis and deemed no longer fit for active service. He was categorised as *'Total Disabled'* and discharged from the Army on 7 August 1916; since his condition was attributed to active service, he was awarded a pension of 25/- (£1.25p) a week, increased in the month before his death.

Private Henry John Waylen died on 2 May 1917, presumably from the effects of his war-time illness, and he was buried in *Tewkesbury Cemetery*, but in a private grave and not with a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone. His name was, however, commemorated on both memorials in Tewkesbury. Henry was awarded the *'1914-15 Star'* medal. Tragically, his father, Edwin, was buried a week after Henry's death after succumbing to tuberculosis in a hospital in Gloucester.

Henry's younger brother, Edwin Bertie Waylen, served in the Royal Field Artillery and survived the war. Henry was the brother-in-law of **Driver Tom Beesley** [†], also in the Royal Field Artillery, who died in January 1917.