

LANCE CORPORAL CHARLES RICHARD WYSE

8707, 2nd Battalion, Gloucestershire Regiment

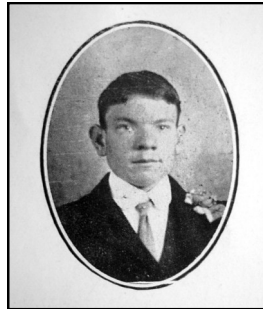
Died aged 28 on 5 May 1915

Remembered with honour on *Ypres (Menin Gate) Memorial*; Panel 22 and 34

Commemorated in Tewkesbury at the Cross and in the Abbey



*Ypres (Menin Gate) Memorial,
Belgium*



*L/Cpl. Charles R. Wyse
[Graphic 22/5/1915]*



*Gloucestershire
Regiment*

CHARLES RICHARD WYSE was born in Tewkesbury (according to the casualty records), which clearly indicates that he was the Richard Charles Wyse whose birth was registered in the December quarter of 1886; it seems that, in common usage, his forenames were transposed as he grew up, a not unusual practice. There is also some inconsistency with his surname. Whilst Charles retained the name of Wyse up to and including his military service, other members of the family adopted the alternative spelling of Wise; indeed there is a strong case that Charles's birth should have been registered with that version. His father, Richard, had been born in Tewkesbury in 1858 as Wise, hence the possibility that the spelling of Wyse was a temporary aberration but one which Charles perpetuated until his death.

On the 1891 Census, Charles Wyse (listed as Richard) was living with his mother, Annie (formerly Hawkes), and four siblings, in St. Mary's Lane. Annie Hawkes had married Richard Wise in 1884; she was then a single mother with two young children, George and Rylie Alice W. (Charles's two half-siblings on the 1891 Census). In 1887 a Richard Wyse was accused of neglecting to maintain his wife, which may account for his presence in Her Majesty's Prison in Birmingham in the 1891 Census. Around the same time, a Charles Wise was in trouble with the police for playing 'Football at the Cross', and was fined 5s. (25p). Charles was a former pupil of the Abbey School (but was also claimed by the Council School in 1914). His parents died relatively young, Annie in 1886 aged 37 and Richard in 1899 aged 40 – in both cases as Wise.

Charles enlisted in Tewkesbury as a regular soldier in the 2nd Battalion of the Gloucesters, from his service number probably in early 1908. In 1911 he was serving in Malta; at the outbreak of war, however, the battalion was stationed at Tientsin in China, as part of an international force. It returned to England on 8 November 1914 when it became part of the newly created 27th Division. Just over a month later, the Battalion moved to France, landing at Le Havre on 18 December 1914.

The first few months were a period of trench warfare. On 20 February 1915 the *Register* reported that Charles had been promoted to Lance Corporal and also that the weather was 'very cold with snow'. He had returned to base 'after some very hard fighting ... but despite these drawbacks, the men are very cheerful.' The Battalion was involved in the *Battle of Neuve Chapelle*, the first large-scale organised attack undertaken by the British Army. On 7 April the 27th Division was then transferred south-east of Ypres. On 22 April the Germans launched the first of four battles, constituting the *Second Battle of Ypres 1915*; the offensive lasted until 25 May, as a means of diverting Allied attention from the Eastern Front and of testing the use of chlorine gas. The 2nd Battalion was holding positions near 'Sanctuary Wood', following a tactical withdrawal, pursued by the enemy. The War Diary for 5 May reported periodic heavy shelling resulting in many casualties.

Lance Corporal Charles Richard Wyse was undoubtedly killed during this bombardment. His body was never recovered and his name is recorded on the *Ypres (Menin Gate) Memorial*. He was awarded the '1914-15 Star' medal.