

LANCE CORPORAL GEORGE THOMAS MANN

8126, 1st Battalion, Gloucestershire Regiment

Died aged 29 on 22 September 1916

Remembered with honour at *Thiepval Memorial, France*; Pier & Face 5A & 5B
Commemorated in Tewkesbury at the Cross and in the Abbey, and on the County Memorial



*Thiepval Memorial,
France*



L/Cpl. G.T. Mann
[Graphic 26/10/1914]



*Gloucestershire
Regiment*

GEORGE THOMAS MANN was born in Twynning in 1886 to Henry Mann and Caroline (formerly Peacey). Both Henry and Caroline were born in Twynning and they had at least eight children. Henry was a farm labourer and the family lived in Post Office Alley, and then at Smith's Court. Two of the children died during the early 1900s: Reginald in 1902 at the age of two and Florence in 1904 at the age of 15. George's parents also died during that period: Caroline in 1903 aged 38 and Henry in 1907 aged 47. The remaining family then split up; in 1911 the youngest surviving child, Ada, was an inmate at the Tewkesbury Workhouse in Gloucester Road. George was a former pupil at Holy Trinity School and a fruiterer's labourer in 1901.

In the circumstances it is not surprising that George enlisted in the Gloucestershire Regiment as a regular soldier in early 1906. On the 1911 Census he was serving as a musician with the 2nd Battalion, at Verdala Barracks, Malta. He completed his time with the Colours in 1913 at which point he was transferred to the Army Reserve and reverted to civilian life. He returned to Tewkesbury on leaving the army and, at the end of 1913, married Ethel M. Sircombe; they had a daughter, also Ethel M., born in 1915.

As a Reservist, George was recalled to the Colours in August 1914 and posted to the 1st Battalion (his original 2nd Battalion was in China, not returning to Britain until November). His medal records show that he was part of the original British Expeditionary Force and landed with his battalion at Le Havre on 13 August 1914. The battalion was part of the 1st Division which was involved in most of the major actions in 1914 and 1915, including the battles of *Mons*,

the *Marne*, the *Aisne*, *First Ypres* and *Loos*. George was reported to have been wounded during the *Battle of the Aisne*, having been shot through the leg; this may have been when the *Graphic* published his photograph. He was awarded the '*1914 Star and Clasp*', recognising service under fire (an 'Old Contemptible').

The battalion remained near Loos until June 1916 then moved south to take part in the *Battles of the Somme 1916*. Initially it was in reserve but moved into the front line at Contalmaison in July and, as part of the *Battle of Bazentin Ridge*, carried out successful attacks to capture German trench systems. It then took part in the *Battle of Pozzières*. Shortly afterwards, from 15 to 22 September, the Division was involved in the *Battle of Flers*, famous for the first use of tanks in battle. The battalion did not participate directly but, towards the end, carried out work to consolidate captured positions near *Mametz Wood*. On 21-22 September the Battalion War Diary noted: '*Two Companies on fatigues ... carried in wounded of 47th Division*' (the Division which finally succeeded in capturing *High Wood*). The Diary does not mention any casualties for 21 September but records one officer and three Other Ranks killed on the following day.

Lance Corporal George Thomas Mann was killed in action on 22 September 1916, no doubt one of these casualties. His body was never recovered and he is commemorated on the *Thiepval Memorial*.

George's widow, Ethel, re-married in 1919 to Charles H. G. Pitts and had a further three children. His younger brother, **Charles Mann**, also volunteered and survived the war.