

Cheltenham & Gloucester Branch
of
The Western Front Association

Remembering one of Gloucestershire's Fallen



Private Joseph Sydney King (16169)
10th (Service) Battalion Gloucestershire Regiment

Joseph King was born at Leckhampton in 1899, the son of John and Annie King, who were then living at Fountain Cottages, St James', Cheltenham. By 1911 the family (Joseph had two siblings) were living at Vine Tree Cottage, Chapel Lane, Great Norwood Street, Cheltenham. Joseph was a Boy Scout and a member of the choir at St James' Church and prior to the war worked for Messrs W H Smith at their bookstall at Cheltenham Midland Railway Station.

He volunteered for Army service in December 1914, at the age of 15 but stating his age to be 18, the minimum for entry. He was accepted and posted to the 10th Battalion Gloucestershire Regiment and went to France on 9 August 1915.

On 25 September he went into action on the first day of the Battle of Loos. The 10th Glosters

were part of 1 Brigade, 1 Division and they were in the front line attacking the German lines just south of the Bois Carre. Despite heavy fire and many of the men being affected by the blowing back of the British gas, the Glosters broke through to the German third line of trenches but suffered devastating casualties, with fewer than 100 answering roll call at nightfall. Joseph King was severely wounded and evacuated to Netley Military Hospital, near Southampton, where he died of his wounds on 8 October 1915, aged just 16 (although his death certificate states 19).

After a funeral service at St James' Church, he was buried in Cheltenham Cemetery, where a CWGC headstone marks his grave. He is commemorated on the Cheltenham Town War Memorial.