

Cheltenham & Gloucester Branch
of
The Western Front Association

Remembering one of Gloucestershire's Fallen



Private Lewis Richard Hopkins (6446)
1st Battalion, Gloucestershire Regiment

Lewis Richard Hopkins was born at Longborough in 1883, the son of Richard and Hannah Hopkins. Richard senior appears to have spent some of his life as a farmer, a sub-postmaster and latterly as a roadman with the local council. According to the 1911 Census the couple had ten children, of whom nine were living at the time of the census.

The 1901 Census shows Lewis as a carter on a farm, living in the local post office but by 1911 he had become a 'general dealer', living in Condicote with a male lodger. He had joined the Army in 1902 and had served with the 1st Battalion, Gloucestershire Regiment. He was posted to South Africa just before the end of the Boer War and did not participate in any fighting. Having transferred to the Reserve he was recalled to the Army on 5 August 1914 and went to France with the 1st Glosters on 31 August 1914.

The *Gloucestershire Echo* of 16 March 1915 reported his death on 12 March. It stated that he was wounded in the head during the Battle of the Aisne on 24 October 1914 and spent a month in hospital in Boulogne before being transferred to St Bartholomew's Hospital, Rochester, where he died in the presence of his friend, Frank Malings, of Condicote. He was 32 years of age. Evidently what was a severe head wound eventually turned into an abscess on the brain.

This report is not entirely accurate with regard to the location of the wounding. On 23 October (according to the *Gloucestershire Regiment in the War 1914-18*) the 1st Glosters were located in the Ypres Salient resisting a German advance attempt to outflank the left of the Allied line at Koekuit, north of Langemark and did not take part in any fighting on the 24th, upon the night of which they were relieved. It is probable that Private Hopkins

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was actually wounded in the 23rd October action. In publishing his photograph the *Cheltenham & Gloucestershire Graphic* states that he was wounded in Belgium.

Having died in the UK, Private Hopkins' remains were brought to Condicote for burial in the parish churchyard on 16 March 1915 and originally a stone Latin Cross marked his grave. It is likely that the inscription on this deteriorated over the years

and in recent times the CWGC has put in place one of its own headstones. His name appears on the Condicote War Memorial and, rather oddly, was once present on the Le Touret Memorial to the Missing, which commemorated those who fell, with no known grave in the area covered by the early 1915 battles at La Bassee, Neuve Chapelle, Aubers Ridge and Festubert.



Condicote War Memorial